MERCEDES

OF CASTILE:

OR,

THE VOYAGE TO CATHAY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE BRAVO," "THE HEADSMAN," "THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS," &c.

I fill this cup, to one made up of loveliness alone
A woman, of her gentle sex the seeming paragon
To whom the better elements and kindly stars have given
A form so fair, that, like the air, 't is less of earth than heaven.

PINKNEY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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MERCEDES OF CASTILE.

CHAPTER I.

"Whither, 'midst falling dew,
While glow the heavens with the last steps of day,
Far, through their rosy depths, dost thou pursue
Thy solitary way?"

BRYANT.

THE slumbers of Columbus were of short duration. While his sleep lasted it was profound, like that of a man who has so much control over his will as to have reduced the animal functions to its domination, for he awoke regularly at short intervals, in order that his watchful eye might take a survey of the state of the weather, and of the condition of his vessels. On this occasion, the admiral was on deck again, a little after one, where he found all things seemingly in that quiet and inspiring calm that ordinarily marks, in fine weather, a middle watch at sea. The men on deck mostly slumbered, the drowsy pilot, and the steersman, with a look-out or two, alone remaining erect and awake. The wind had freshened, and the caravel was ploughing her way ahead, with an untiring industry, leaving Ferro and its dangers, at each instant, more and more remote. The only noises that were audible, were the gentle sighing of the wind among the cordage, the wash of the water, and the occasional creaking of a yard, as the breeze forced it, with a firmer pressure, to distend its tackle and to strain its fittings.

The night was dark, and it required a moment to accustom the eye to objects by a light so feeble: when this was done, however, the admiral discovered that the ship was not close by the wind, as he had ordered that she should be kept. Walking to the helm, he perceived that it was so far borne up, as to cause her head to fall off towards the northeast, which was, in fact, in the direction to Spain.

"Art thou a seaman, and disregardest thy course, in this heedless manner?" sternly demanded the admiral; "or art thou only a muleteer, who fancieth he is merely winding his way along a path of the mountains. Thy heart is in Spain, and thou thinkest that a vain wish to return may meet with some relief in this idle artifice!"

"Alas, Señor Almirante! your Excellency hath judged rightly in believing that my heart is in Spain, where it ought to be, moreover, as I have left behind me at Moguer seven motherless children."

"Dost thou not know, fellow, that I too am a father, and that the dearest objects of a father's hopes are left behind me, also? In what, then, dost thou differ from me, my son being also without a mother's care?"

"Excellency, he hath an admiral for a father, whilst my boys have only a helmsman!"

"And what will it matter to Don Diego,"—Columbus was fond of dwelling on the honours he had received from the sovereigns, even though it were a little irregularly—"what will it matter to Don Diego, my son, that his parent perished an admiral, if he perish at all; and in what will he profit more than your children, when he findeth himself altogether without a parent?"

"Señor, it will profit him to be cherished by the king and queen, to be honoured as your child, and to be fostered and fed as the offspring of a viceroy, instead of being cast aside as the issue of a nameless mariner."

"Friend, thou hast some reason in this, and insomuch I respect thy feelings"—answered Columbus, who, like our own Washington, appears to have always submitted to a lofty and pure sense of justice—"but thou would'st do well to remember the influence that thy manly and successful perseverance in this voyage may produce on the welfare of thy children, instead of thus dwelling on weak forebodings

of ills that are little likely to come to pass. Neither of us hath much to expect, should we fail of our discoveries, while both may hope every thing should we succeed. Can I trust thee now, to keep the ship on her course, or must I send for another mariner to relieve the helm?"

"It may be better, noble admiral, to do the last. I will bethink me of thy counsel, and strive with my longings for home; but it would be safer to seek another for this duty, while we are so near to Spain."

"Dost thou know one Sancho Mundo, a common seaman of this crew?"

"Señor, we all know him; he hath the name of the most skilful of our craft, of all in Moguer."

"Is he of thy watch, or sleepeth he with his fellows of the relief below?"

"Señor, he is of our watch; and sleepeth not with his fellows below, for the reason that he sleepeth on deck. No care, or danger, can unsettle the confidence of Sancho! To him the sight of land is so far an evil, that I doubt if he rejoice should we ever reach those distant countries that your Excellency seemeth to expect we may."

"Go find this Sancho, and bid him come hither: I will discharge thy office the while."

Columbus now took the helm with his own hands, and with a light play of the tiller brought the ship immediately up as near the wind as she would lie. The effect was felt in more quick and sudden plunges into the sea, a deeper heel to leeward, and a fresh creaking aloft, that denoted a renewed and increased strain on all the spars and their tackle. In the course of a few minutes, however, Sancho appeared rubbing his eyes, and yawning.

"Take thou this duty," said the admiral, as soon as the man was near him, "and discharge it faithfully. Those who have been here already, have proved unfaithful, suffering the vessel to fall off, in the direction of Spain; I expect better things of thee. I think, friend Sancho, I may count on thee as a true and faithful follower, even in extremity?"

"Señor Don Almirante," said Sancho, who took the helm, giving it a little play to feel his command of it, as a skilful coachman brings his team in subjection on first assuming

the reins, "I am a servant of the crown's, and your infe-rior and subordinate; such duty as becometh me, I am ready to discharge."

"Thou hast no fear of this voyage—no childish forebodings of becoming an endless wanderer in an unknown sea, without hope of ever seeing wife or child again?"

"Señor, you seem to know our hearts as well as if your Excellency had made them with your own hands, and then put them into our miserable bodies!"

"Thou hast, then, none of these unsuitable and unseamanlike apprehensions?"

"Not as much, Excellency, as would raise an ave in a parish priest, or a sigh in an old woman. I may have my misgivings, for we all have weaknesses, but none of them incline to any dread of sailing about the ocean, since that is my happiness; nor to any concern about wife and children, not having the first, and wishing not to think I have the last."

"If thou hast misgivings, name them.—I could wish to make one firm as thou, wholly my friend."

"I doubt not, Señor, that we shall reach Cathay, or whatever country your Excellency may choose to seek; I make no question of your ability to beard the Great Khan, and, at need, to strip the very jewels from his turban; as turban he must have, being an Infidel; nor do I feel any misgivings about the magnitude and richness of our discoveries and freights, since I believe, Señor Don Almirante, you are skilful enough to take the caravels in at one end of the earth and out at the other; or, even to load them with carbuncles, should diamonds be wanting."

"If thou hast this faith in thy leader, what other distrust can give thee concern?"

"I distrust the value of the share, whether of honour or of jewels, that will fall to the lot of one Sancho Mundo, a poor unknown, almost shirtless mariner, that hath more need of both than hath ever crossed the mind of our gracious lady, Doña Isabella, or of her royal consort."

"Sancho, thou art a proof that no man is without his failings, and I fear thou art mercenary. They say all men have their prices; thou seemest clearly to have thine."

"Your Excellency hath not been sailing about the world

for nothing, or you could not tell every man his inclinations so easily. I have ever suspected I was mercenary, and so have accepted all sorts of presents, to keep the feeling down. Nothing appeases a mercenary longing like gifts and rewards; and as for price, I strive hard to keep mine as high as possible, lest it should bring me into discredit for a mean and grovelling spirit. Give me a high price, and plenty of gifts, and I can be as disinterested as a mendicant friar."

"I understand thee, Sancho; thou art to be bought, but not to be frightened. In thy opinion a single *dobla* is too little to be divided between thee and thy friend, the Portuguese. I will make a league with thee on thine own terms; here is another piece of gold; see that thou remainest true to me throughout the voyage."

"Count on me, without scruple, Señor Don Almirante, and with scruples, too, should they interfere. Your Excellency hath not a more disinterested friend in the fleet. I only hope that when the share-list shall be written out, the name of Sancho Mundo may have an honourable place, as will become his fidelity. And now, your Excellency, go sleep in peace: the Santa Maria shall lie as near to the route to Cathay, as this south-westerly breeze will suffer."

Columbus complied, though he rose once or twice more, during the night, to ascertain the state of the weather, and that the men did their duties. So long as Sancho remained at the helm, he continued faithful to his compact; but, as he went below with his watch, at the usual hour, successors were put in his place, who betrayed the original treachery of the other helmsman. When Luis left his hammock, Columbus was already at work, ascertaining the distance that had been run in the course of the night. Catching the inquiring glance of the young man, the admiral observed, gravely, and not altogether without melancholy in his manner—

"We have had a good run, though it hath been more northerly than I could have desired. I find that the vessels are thirty leagues farther from Ferro than when the sun set, and thou seest, here, that I have written four-and-twenty in the reckoning, that is intended for the eyes of

the people. But there hath been great weakness at work this night among the steersmen, if not treachery: they have kept the ship away in a manner to cause her to run a part of the time in a direction nearly parallel to the coast of Europe, so that they have been endeavouring to deceive me, on the deck, whilst I have thought it necessary to attempt deceiving them in the cabin. It is painful, Don Luis, to find such deceptions resorted to, or such deceptions necessary, when one is engaged in an enterprise that surpasseth all others ever yet attempted by man, and that, too, with a view to the glory of God, the advantage of the human race, and the especial interests of Spain."

"The holy churchmen, themselves, Don Christopher, are obliged to submit to this evil," answered the careless Luis; "and it does not become us laymen to repine at what they endure. I am told that half the miracles they perform are, in truth, miracles of but a very indifferent quality, the doubts and want of faith of us hardened sinners rendering such little inventions necessary for the good of our souls."

"That there are false-minded and treacherous churchmen, as well as false-minded and treacherous laymen, Luis, I little doubt," answered the admiral, "but this cometh of the fall of man, and of his evil nature. There are also righteous and true miracles, that come of the power of God, and which are intended to uphold the faith, and to encourage those who love and honour his holy name. I do not esteem any thing that hath yet befallen us to belong very distinctly to this class; nor do I venture to hope that we are to be favoured in this manner by an especial intervention in our behalf; but it exceedeth all the machinations of the devils to persuade me that we shall be deserted while bent on so glorious a design, or that we are not, indirectly and secretly, led, in our voyage, by a spirit and knowledge that both come of Divine grace and infinite wisdom."

"This may be so, Don Christopher, so far as you are concerned; though, for myself, I claim no higher a guide than an angel. An angel's purity, and I hope I may add, an angel's love, lead me, in my blind path across the ocean!"

"So it seemeth to thee, Luis; but thou canst not know

that a higher power doth not use the Doña Mercedes, as an instrument in this matter. Although no miracle rendereth it apparent to the vulgar, a spirit is placed in my breast, in conducting this enterprise, that I should deem it blasphemy to resist. God be praised, my boy, we are at last quit of the Portuguese, and are fairly on our road! At present all our obstacles must arise from the elements, or from our own fears. It gladdeneth my heart to find that the two Pinzons remain true, and that they keep their caravels close to the Santa Maria, like men bent on maintaining their faith, and seeing an end of the adventure."

As Luis was now ready, he and the admiral left the cabin together. The sun had risen, and the broad expanse of the ocean was glittering with his rays. The wind had freshened, and was gradually getting farther to the south, so that the vessels headed up nearly to their course; and, there being but little sea, the progress of the fleet was, in proportion, considerable. Every thing appeared propitious; and the first burst of grief, on losing sight of known land, having subsided, the crews were more tranquil, though dread of the future was smothered, like the latent fires of a volcano, rather than extinguished. The aspect of the sea was favourable, offering nothing to view that was unusual to mariners; and, as there is always something grateful in a lively breeze, when unaccompanied with danger, the men were probably encouraged by a state of things to which they were accustomed, and which brought with it cheerfulness and hope. In the course of the day and night, the vessels ran a hundred and eighty miles, still farther into the trackless waste of the ocean, without awakening half the apprehensions in the bosoms of the mariners that they had experienced on losing sight of land. Columbus, however, acting on the cautious principle he had adopted, when he laid before his people the result of the twenty-four hours' work, reduced the distance to about one hundred and fifty.

Tuesday, the 1st of September, brought a still more favourable change of wind. This day, for the first time since quitting the Canaries, the heads of the vessels were laid fairly to the west; and, with the old world directly behind them, and the unknown ocean in their front, the adventurers proceeded onward with a breeze at south-east. The

rate of sailing was about five miles in the hour; compensating for the want of speed, by the steadiness of their progress, and by the directness of their course.

The observations that are usually made at sea, when the sun is in the zenith, were over, and Columbus had just announced to his anxious companions that the vessels were gradually setting south, owing to the drift of some invisible current, when a cry from the mast-head, announced the proximity of a whale. As the appearance of one of these monsters of the deep breaks the monotony of a sea-life, every one was instantly on the look-out, some leaping into the rigging, and others upon the rails, in order to catch a glimpse of his gambols.

"Dost thou see him, Sancho?" demanded the admiral of Mundo, the latter being near him at the moment. "To me the water hath no appearance of any such animals being at hand."

"Your Excellency's eye, Señor Don Almirante, is far truer than that of the babbler's aloft. Sure as this is the Atlantic, and yonder is the foam of the crests of the waves, there is no whale."

"The flukes!—the flukes!" shouted a dozen voices at once, pointing to a spot where a dark object arose above the froth of the sea, showing a pointed summit, with short arms extended on each side. "He playeth with his head beneath the water, and the tail uppermost!"

"Alas!—Alas!" exclaimed the practised Sancho, with the melancholy of a true seaman, "what these inexperienced and hasty brawlers call the fluke of a whale, is nought but the mast of some unhappy ship, that hath left her bones, with her freight and her people, in the depths of the ocean!"

"Thou art right, Sancho," returned the admiral. "I now see that thou meanest: it is truly a spar, and doubtless betokeneth a shipwreck."

This fact passed swiftly from mouth to mouth, and the sadness that ever accompanies the evidences of such a disaster, settled on the faces of all the beholders. The pilots alone showed indifference, and they consulted on the expediency of endeavouring to secure the spar, as a resource in time of need; but they abandoned the attempt on account of the agitation of the water, and of the fairness of the wind,

the latter being an advantage a true mariner seldom likes to lose.

"There is a warning to us!" exclaimed one of the disaffected, as the Santa Maria sailed past the waving summit of the spar; "God hath sent this sign, to warn us not to venture where he never intended navigators to go!"

"Say, rather," put in Sancho, who, having taken the fee, had ever since proved a willing advocate, "it is an omen of encouragement sent from heaven. Dost thou not see that the part of the mast that is visible resembleth a cross, which holy sign is intended to lead us on, filled with hopes of success?"

"This is true, Sancho," interrupted Columbus. "A cross hath been reared for our edification, as it might be, in the midst of the ocean, and we are to regard it as a proof that Providence is with us, in our attempt to carry its blessings to the aid and consolation of the heathen of Asia."

As the resemblance to the holy symbol was far from fanciful, this happy hit of Sancho's was not without its effect. The reader will understand the likeness all the better, when he is told that the upper end of a mast has much of the appearance of a cross, by means of the trussel-trees; and, as often happens, this particular spar was floating nearly perpendicular, owing to some heavy object being fast to its heel, leaving the summit raised some fifteen or twenty feet above the surface of the sea. In a quarter of an hour this last relict of Europe and of civilization disappeared in the wake of the vessels, gradually diminishing in size and settling towards the water, until its faint outlines vanished in threads, still wearing the well-known shape of the revered symbol of Christianity.

After this little incident, the progress of the vessels was uninterrupted by any event worthy of notice for two days and nights. All this time the wind was favourable, and the adventurers proceeded due west, by compass, which was in fact, however, going a little north of the real point —a truth that the knowledge of the period had not yet mastered. Between the morning of the 10th September, and the evening of the 13th, the fleet had passed over near ninety leagues of ocean, holding its way in a line but a little deviating from a direct one athwart the great waste

of water, and having consequently reached a point as far, if not farther west than the position of the Azores,* then the most westerly land known to European navigators. On the 13th, the currents proved to be adverse, and having a south-easterly set, they had a tendency to cause the ships to sheer southwardly, bringing them, each hour, nearer to the northern margin of the trades.

The admiral and Luis were at their customary post, on the evening of the 13th, the day last mentioned, as Sancho left the helm, his tour of duty having just ended. Instead of going forward, as usual, among the people, the fellow hesitated, surveyed the poop with a longing eye, and finding it occupied only by the admiral and his constant companion, he ascended the ladder, as if desirous of making some communication.

"Would'st thou aught with me, Sancho?" demanded the admiral, waiting for the man to make certain that no one else was on the narrow deck. "Speak freely: thou hast my confidence."

"Señor Don Almirante, your Excellency well knoweth that I am no fresh-water fish, to be frightened at the sight of a shark or a whale, or one that is terrified because a ship headeth west, instead of east; and yet do I come to say that this voyage is not altogether without certain signs and marvels, that it may be well for a mariner to respect, as unusual, if not ominous."

"As thou sayest, Sancho, thou art no driveller to be terrified by the flight of a bird, or at the presage of a drifting spar, and thou awakenest my curiosity to know more. The Señor de Muños is my confidential secretary, and nothing need be hid from him. Speak freely, then, and without further delay. If gold is thy aim, be certain thou shalt have it."

"No, Señor, my news is not worth a maravedi, or it is far beyond the price of gold; such as it is, your Excellency can take it, and think no more of my reward. You know, Señor, that we old mariners will have our thoughts as we stand at the helm, sometimes fancying the smiles and good looks of some hussy ashore, sometimes remembering the flavour of rich fruits and well-savoured mutton; and then, again, for a wonder, bethinking us of our sins."

"Fellow, all this I well know; but it is not matter for an admiral's ear."

"I know not that, Señor; I have known admirals who have relished mutton after a long cruise; ay, and who have bethought them, too, of smiling faces and bright eyes, and who, if they did not, at times, bethink them of their sins, have done what was much worse, help to add to the great account that was heaping up against them. Now, there was——"

"Let me toss this vagabond into the sea, at once, Don Christopher," interrupted the impatient Luis, making a forward movement as if to execute the threat, an act which the hand of Columbus arrested; "we shall never hear a tale the right end first, as long as he remaineth in the ship."

"I thank you, my young Lord of Llera," answered Sancho, with an ironical smile, "if you are as ready at drowning seamen, as you are at unhorsing Christian knights in the tourney, and Infidels in the fray, I would rather that another should be master of my baths."

"Thou know'st me, knave?—Thou hast seen me on some earlier voyage."

"A cat may look at a king, Señor Conde; and why not a mariner on his passenger? But spare your threats, and your secret is in safe hands. If we reach Cathay, no one will be ashamed of having made the voyage; and if we miss it, it is little likely that any will go back to relate the precise manner in which your excellency was drowned, or starved to death, or in what other manner you became a saint in Abraham's bosom."

"Enough of this!" said Columbus, sternly; "relate what thou hast to say, and see that thou art discreet touching this young noble."

"Señor, your word is law. Well, Don Christopher, it is one of the tricks of us mariners, at night, to be watching an old and constant friend, the north star; and while thus occupied, an hour since, I noted that this faithful guide and the compass by which I was steering, told different tales."

"Art certain of this?" demanded the admiral, with a quickness and emphasis that betrayed the interest he felt in the communication.

"As certain, Señor, as fifty years' looking at the star, and forty years' watching of the compass can make a man. But there is no occasion, your Excellency, to depend on my ignorance, since the star is still where God placed it; and there is your private compass at your elbow—one may be compared with the other."

Columbus had already bethought him of making this comparison; and by the time Sancho ceased speaking, he and Luis were examining the instrument with eager curiosity. The first, and the most natural, impression, was a belief that the needle of the instrument below was defective, or, at least, influenced by some foreign cause; but an attentive observation soon convinced the navigator, that the remark of Sancho was true. He was both astonished and concerned to find that the habitual care, and professional eye of the fellow had been active, and quick to note a change as unusual as this. It was indeed so common with mariners to compare their compasses with the north star, a luminary that was supposed never to vary its position in the heavens, as that position related to man, that no experienced seaman, who happened to be at the helm at nightfall, could well overlook the phenomenon.

After repeated observations with his own compasses, of which he kept two—one on the poop, and another in the cabin; and having recourse also to the two instruments in the binnacle, Columbus was compelled to admit to himself that all four varied, alike, from their usual direction, nearly six degrees. Instead of pointing due north, or, at least, in a direct line towards a point on the horizon immediately beneath the star, they pointed some five or six degrees to the westward of it. This was both a novel and an astounding departure from the laws of nature, as they were then understood, and threatened to render the desired results of the voyage so much the more difficult of attainment, as it at once deprived the adventurers of a sure reliance on the mariner's principal guide, and would render it difficult to sail, with any feeling of certainty as to the course, in cloudy weather, or dark nights. The first thought of the admiral, on this occasion, however, was to prevent the effect which such a discovery would be likely to produce on men already disposed to anticipate the worst.

"Thou wilt say nothing of this, Sancho?" he observed to the man. "Here is another dobla to add to thy store."

"Excellency, pardon a humble seaman's disobedience, if my hand refuse to open to your gift. This matter toucheth of supernatural means; and, as the devil may have an agency in the miracle, in order to prevent our converting them heathen, of whom you so often speak, I prefer to keep my soul as pure as may be, in the matter, since no one knoweth what weapons we may be driven to use, should we come to real blows with the Father of Sin."

"Thou wilt, at least, prove discreet?"

"Trust me for that, Señor Don Almirante; not a word shall pass my lips about this matter, until I have your Excellency's permission to speak."

Columbus dismissed the man, and then he turned towards Luis, who had been a silent but attentive listener to what had passed.

"You seem disturbed at this departure from the usual laws of the compass, Don Christopher," observed the young man, gaily. "To me it would seem better to rely altogether on Providence, which would scarcely lead us out here, into the wide Atlantic, on its own errand, and desert us when we most need its aid."

"God implants in the bosom of his servants a desire to advance his ends, but human agents are compelled to employ natural means; and, in order to use such means advantageously, it is necessary to understand them. I look upon this phenomenon as a proof that our voyage is to result in discoveries of unknown magnitude, among which, perhaps, are to be numbered some clue to the mysteries of the needle. The mineral riches of Spain differ, in certain particulars, from the mineral riches of France; for, though some things are common to all lands, others are peculiar to particular countries. We may find regions where the loadstone abounds, or may, even now, be in the neighbourhood of some island that hath an influence on our compasses that we cannot explain."

"Is it known that islands have ever produced this effect on the needle?"

"It is not — nor do I deem such a circumstance very probable, though all things are possible. We will wait

patiently for further proofs that this phenomenon is real and permanent, ere we reason further on a matter that is so difficult to be understood."

The subject was now dropped, though the unusual incident gave the great navigator an uneasy and thoughtful night. He slept little, and often was his eye fastened on the compass that was suspended in his cabin as a "telltale," for so seamen term the instrument by which the officer overlooks the course that is steered by the helmsman, even when the latter least suspects his supervision. Columbus arose sufficiently early to get a view of the star before its brightness was dimmed by the return of light, and made another deliberate comparison of the position of this familiar heavenly body with the direction of the needles. The examination proved a slight increase of the variation, and tended to corroborate the observations of the previous night. The result of the reckoning showed that the vessels had run nearly a hundred miles in the course of the last twenty-four hours, and Columbus now believed himself to be about six times that distance west of Ferro, though even the pilots fancied themselves by no means as far.

As Sancho kept his secret, and no other eye among the helmsmen was as vigilant, the important circumstance, as yet, escaped general attention. It was only at night, indeed, that the variation could be observed by means of the polar star, and it was yet so slight that no one but a very experienced and quick-eyed mariner would be apt to note it. The whole of the day and night of the 14th consequently passed without the crew's taking the alarm, and this so much the more as the wind had fallen, and the vessels were only some sixty miles farther west than when they commenced. Still Columbus noted the difference, slight as was the change, ascertaining, with the precision of an experienced and able navigator, that the needle was gradually varying more and more to the westward, though it was by steps that were nearly imperceptible.

CHAPTER II.

On thy unaltering blaze
The half-wrecked mariner, his compass lost,
Fixes his steady gaze,
And steers, undoubting, to the friendly coast;
And they who stray in perilous wastes, by night,
Are glad when thou dost shine to guide their footsteps right."

Hymn to the North Star.

The following day was Saturday, the 15th, when the little fleet was ten days from Gomera, or it was the sixth morning since the adventurers had lost sight of the land. The last week had been one of melancholy forebodings, though habit was beginning to assert its influence, and the men manifested openly less uneasiness than they had done in the three or four previous days. Their apprehensions were getting to be dormant for want of any exciting and apparent stimulus, though they existed as latent impulses, in readiness to be roused at the occurrence of any untoward event. The wind continued fair, though light—the whole twenty-four hours' work showing considerably less than a hundred miles, as the true progress west. All this time Columbus kept his attention fastened on the needles, and he perceived that as the vessels slowly made their westing, the magnets pointed more and more, though by scarcely palpable changes, in the same direction.

The admiral and Luis, by this time, had fallen into such habits of close communication, that they usually rose and slept at the same time. Though far too ignorant of the hazards he ran to feel uneasiness, and constitutionally, as well as morally, superior to idle alarms, the young man had got to feel a sort of sportsman's excitement in the result; and, by this time, had not Mercedes existed, he would have been as reluctant to return without seeing Cathay, as Columbus himself. They conversed together of their progress and their hopes, without ceasing, and Luis took so much interest in his situation as to begin to learn how to

discriminate in matters that might be supposed to affect its duration and ends.

On the night of the Saturday just mentioned, Columbus and his reputed secretary were alone on the poop, conversing, as usual, on the signs of the times, and of the events of the day.

"The Niña had something to say to you, last evening, Don Christopher," observed the young man; "I was occupied in the cabin, with my journal, and had no opportunity of knowing what passed."

"Her people had seen a bird or two, that are thought never to go far from the land. It is possible that islands are at no great distance, for man hath nowhere passed over any very great extent of sea without meeting with them. We cannot, however, waste the time necessary for a search, since the glory and profit of ascertaining the situation of a group of islands would be but a poor compensation for the loss of a continent."

"Do you still remark those unaccountable changes in the needles, Señor?"

"In this respect there is no change, except that which goeth to corroborate the phenomenon. My chief apprehension is of the effect on the people, when the circumstance shall be known."

"Are there no means to persuade them that the needle pointeth thus west, as a sign Providence willeth they should pursue that course, by persevering in the voyage."

"This might do, Luis," answered the admiral, smiling, "had not fear so sharpened their wits, that their first question would be an inquiry why Providence should deprive us of the *means* of knowing whither we are travelling, when it so much wisheth us to go in any particular direction."

A cry from the watch on deck arrested the discourse, while a sudden brightness broke on the night, illuminating the vessels and the ocean, as if a thousand lamps were shedding their brilliancy upon the surrounding portion of the sphere. A ball of fire was glancing athwart the heavens, and seemed to fall into the sea, at the distance of a few leagues, or at the limits of the visible horizon. Its disappearance was followed by a gloom as profound as the extraordinary and fleeting light had been brilliant. This

was only the passage of a meteor; but it was such a meteor as men do not see more than once in their lives—if it is seen as often; and the superstitious mariners did not fail to note the incident among the extraordinary omens that accompanied the voyage; some auguring good, and others evil, from the event.

"By St. Iago!" exclaimed Luis, as soon as the light had vanished, "Señor Don Christopher, this voyage of ours doth not seem fated to pass away unheeded by the elements and other notable powers! Whether these portents speak in our favour, or not, they speak us any thing but men engaged in an every-day occupation."

"Thus it is with the human mind!" returned Columbus. "Let but its owner pass beyond the limits of his ordinary habits and duties, and he sees marvels in the most simple changes of the weather—in a flash of lightning—a blast of air—or the passage of a meteor; little heeding that these miracles exist in his own consciousness, and have no connexion with the every-day laws of nature. These sights are by no means uncommon, especially in low latitudes; and they augur neither for nor against our enterprise."

"Except, Señor Almirante, as they may beset the spirits and haunt the imaginations of the men. Sancho telleth me, that a brooding discontent is growing among them; and, that while they seem so tranquil, their disrelish of the voyage is hourly getting to be more and more decided."

Notwithstanding this opinion of the admiral, and some pains that he afterwards took to explain the phenomenon to the people on deck, the passage of the meteor had, indeed, not only produced a deep impression on them, but its history went from watch to watch, and was the subject of earnest discourse throughout the night. But the incident produced no open manifestation of discontent; a few deeming it a propitious omen, though most secretly considered it an admonition from heaven against any impious attempts to pry into those mysteries of nature that, according to their notions, God, in his providence, had not seen fit to reveal to man.

All this time the vessels were making a steady progress towards the west. The wind had often varied, both in force and direction, but never in a manner to compel the

ships to shorten sail, or to deviate from what the admiral believed to be the proper course. They supposed themselves to be steering due west, but, owing to the variation, were in fact now holding a west-and-by-south course, and were gradually getting nearer to the trades; a movement in which they had also been materially aided by the force of the currents. In the course of the 15th and 16th of the month, the fleet had got about two hundred miles farther from Europe, Columbus taking the usual precaution to lessen the distance in the public reckoning. The latter day was a Sunday; and the religious offices, which were then seldom neglected in a Christian ship, produced a deep and sublime effect on the feelings of the adventurers. Hitherto the weather had partaken of the usual character of the season, and a few clouds, with a slight drizzling rain, had relieved the heat; but these soon passed away, and were succeeded by a soft south-east wind, that seemed to come charged with the fragrance of the land. The men united in the evening chants, under these propitious circumstances; the vessels drawing near each other, as if it might be to form one temple in honour of God, amid the vast solitudes of an ocean that had seldom, if ever, been whitened by a sail. Cheerfulness and hope succeeded to this act of devotion, and both were speedily heightened by a cry from the look-out aloft, who pointed ahead and to leeward, as if he beheld some object of peculiar interest in that quarter. The helms were varied a little; and in a few minutes the vessels entered into a field of sea-weed, that covered the ocean for miles. This sign of the vicinity of land was received by the mariners with a shout; and the very beings who had so shortly before been balancing on the verge of despair, now became elate with joy.

These weeds were indeed of a character to awaken hope in the bosom of the most experienced mariner. Although some had lost their freshness, a great proportion of them were still green, and had the appearance of having been quite recently separated from their parent rocks, or the earth that had nourished them. No doubt was now entertained even by the pilots, of the vicinity of land. Tunny-fish were also seen in numbers, and the people of the Niña were sufficiently fortunate to strike one. The seamen em-

braced each other, with tears in their eyes, and many a hand was squeezed in friendly congratulation, that the previous day would have been withheld in surly misanthropy.

"And do you partake of all this hope, Don Christopher?" demanded Luis; "are we really to expect the Indies as a consequence of these marine plants, or is the expectation idle?"

"The people deceive themselves in supposing our voyage near an end. Cathay must yet be very distant from us. We have come but three hundred and sixty leagues since losing sight of Ferro, which, according to my computations, cannot be much more than a third of our journey. Aristotle mentioneth that certain vessels of Cadiz were forced westward by heavy gales, until they reached a sea covered with weeds, a spot where the tunny-fish abounded. This is the fish, thou must know, Luis, that the ancients fancied could see better with the right eye than with the left, because it hath been noted that, in passing the Bosphorus, they ever take the right shore in proceeding towards the Euxine, and the left in returning—"

"By St. Francis! there can be no wonder if creatures so one-sided in their vision, should have strayed thus far from home," interrupted the light-hearted Luis, laughing. "Doth Aristotle, or the other ancients, tell us how they regarded beauty; or whether their notions of justice were like those of the magistrate who hath been fed by both parties?"

"Aristotle speaketh only of the presence of the fish in the weedy ocean, as we see them before us. The mariners of Cadiz fancied themselves in the neighbourhood of sunken islands, and, the wind permitting, made the best of their way back to their own shores. This place, in my judgment, we have now reached; but I expect to meet with no land, unless, indeed, we may happen to fall in with some island that lieth off here in the ocean, as a sort of beacon between the shore of Europe and that of Asia. Doubtless land is not distant, whence these weeds have drifted, but I attach little importance to its sight, or discovery. Cathay is my aim, Don Luis, and I am a searcher for continents, not islands."

It is now known that while Columbus was right in his expectations of not finding a continent so early, he was

mistaken in supposing land to lie anywhere in that vicinity. Whether these weeds are collected by the course of the currents, or whether they rise from the bottom, torn from their beds by the action of the water, is not yet absolutely ascertained, though the latter is the most common opinion, extensive shoals existing in this quarter of the ocean. Under the latter supposition, the mariners of Cadiz were nearer the truth than is first apparent, a sunken island having all the characteristics of a shoal, but those which may be supposed to be connected with the mode of formation.

No land was seen. The vessels continued their progress at a rate but little varying from five miles the hour, shoving aside the weeds, which at times accumulated in masses under their bows, but which could offer no serious obstacle to their progress. As for the admiral, so lofty were his views, so steady his opinions concerning the great geographical problem he was about to solve, and so determined his resolution to persevere to the end, that he rather hoped to miss than to fall in with the islands, that he fancied could be at no great distance. The day and night carried the vessels rather more than one hundred miles to the westward, placing the fleet not far from midway between the meridians that bounded the extreme western and eastern margins of the two continents, though still much nearer to Africa than to America, following the parallel of latitude on which it was sailing. As the wind continued steady, and the sea was as smooth as a river, the three vessels kept close together, the Pinta, the swiftest craft, reducing her canvass for that purpose. During the afternoon's watch of the day that succeeded that of the meeting with the weeds, which was Monday, the 17th September, or the eighth day after losing sight of Ferro, Martin Alonzo Pinzon hailed the Santa Maria, and acquainted the pilot on deck of his intention to get the amplitude of the sun, as soon as the luminary should be low enough, with a view to ascertain how far his needles retained their virtue. This observation, one of no unusual occurrence among mariners, it was thought had better be made in all the caravels simultaneously, that any error of one might be corrected by the greater accuracy of the rest.

Columbus and Luis were in a profound sleep, in their

cots, taking their siestas, when the former was awakened by such a shake of the shoulder as seamen are wont to give, and are content to receive. It never required more than a minute to arouse the great navigator from his deepest slumbers to the fullest possession of his faculties, and he was awake in an instant.

"Señor Don Almirante," said Sancho, who was the intruder, "it is time to be stirring: all the pilots are on deck in readiness to measure the amplitude of the sun, as soon as the heavenly bodies are in their right places. The west is already beginning to look like a dying dolphin, and ere many minutes it will be gilded like the helmet of a Moorish Sultan."

"An amplitude measured!" exclaimed Columbus, quitting his cot on the instant. "This is news, indeed! Now we may look for such a stir among the people, as hath not been witnessed since we left Cadiz!"

"So it hath appeared to me, your Excellency, for the mariner hath some such faith in the needle as the churchman bestoweth on the goodness of the Son of God. The people are in a happy humour at this moment, but the saints only know what is to come!"

The admiral awoke Luis, and in five minutes both were at their customary station on the poop. Columbus had gained so high a reputation for skill in navigation, his judgment invariably proving right, even when opposed to those of all the pilots in the fleet, that the latter were not sorry to perceive he had no intention to take an instrument in hand, but seemed disposed to leave the issue to their own skill and practice. The sun slowly settled, the proper time was watched, and then these rude mariners set about their task, in the mode that was practised in their time. Martin Alonzo Pinzon, the most ready and best taught of them all, was soonest through with his task. From his lofty stand, the admiral could overlook the deck of the Pinta, which vessel was sailing but a hundred yards from the Santa Maria, and it was not long before he observed her commander moving from one compass to another, in the manner of a man who was disturbed. Another minute or two elapsed, when the skiff of the caravel was launched; a sign was made for the admiral's vessel to shorten sail,

and Martin Alonzo was soon forcing his way through the weeds that still covered the surface of the ocean towards the Santa Maria. As he gained the deck of the latter ship, on one of her sides, his kinsman, Vicente Yañez, the commander of the Niña, did the same thing on the other. In the next instant both were at the side of the great navigator, on the poop, whither they had been followed by Sancho Ruiz and Bartolemeo Roldan, the two pilots of the admiral.

"What meaneth this haste, good Martin Alonzo?" calmly asked Columbus: "thou and thy brother, Vicente Yañez, and these honest pilots, hurry towards me as if ye had cheering tidings from Cathay."

"God only knoweth, Señor Almirante, if any of us are ever to be permitted to see that distant land, or any shore that is only to be reached by mariners through the aid of a needle," answered the elder Pinzon, with a haste that almost rendered him breathless. "Here have we all been at the comparison of the instruments, and we find them, without a single exception, varying from the true north, by, at least, a full point!"

"That would be a marvel, truly! Ye have made some oversight in your observations, or have been heedless in the estimates."

"Not so, noble admiral," put in Vicente Yañez, to sustain his brother. "Even the magnets are becoming false to us; and as I mentioned the circumstance to the oldest steersman of my craft, he assures me that the North Star did not tally with his instrument throughout the night!"

"Others say the same, here," added Ruiz—"Nay, some are ready to swear that the wonder hath been noted ever since we entered the sea of weeds!"

"This may be so Señores," answered Columbus, with an undisturbed mien, "and yet no evil follow. We all know that the heavenly bodies have their revolutions, some of which no doubt are irregular, while others are more in conformity with certain settled rules. Thus it is with the sun himself, which passeth once round the earth in the short space of twenty-four hours, while no doubt he hath other, and more subtle movements, that are unknown to us, on account of the exceeding distance at which he is placed in the heavens. Many astronomers have thought that they

have been able to detect these variations, spots having been seen on the disk of the orb at times, which have disappeared, as if hid behind the body of the luminary. I think it will be found that the North Star hath made some slight deviation in its position, and that it will continue thus to move for some short period, after which, no doubt, it will be found returning to its customary position, when it will be seen that its temporary eccentricity hath in no manner disturbed its usual harmony with the needles. Note the star well throughout the night, and in the morning let the amplitude be again taken, when I think the truth of my conjecture will be proved by the regularity of the movement of the heavenly body. So far from being discouraged by this sign, we ought rather to rejoice that we have made a discovery, which, of itself, will entitle the expedition to the credit of having added materially to the stores of science!"

The pilots were fain to be satisfied with this solution of their doubts, in the absence of any other means of accounting for them. They remained long on the poop discoursing of the strange occurrence, and, as men even in their blindest moods, usually reason themselves into either tranquillity or apprehension, they fortunately succeeded in doing the first on this occasion. With the men there was more difficulty, for when it became known to the crews of the three vessels that the needles had begun to deviate from their usual direction, a feeling akin to despair seized on them, almost without exception. Here Sancho was of material service. When the panic was at its height, and the people were on the point of presenting themselves to the admiral, with a demand that the heads of the caravels should be immediately turned towards the north-east, he interposed with his knowledge and influence to calm the tumult. The first means this trusty follower had recourse to, in order to bring his shipmates back to reason, was to swear, without reservation, that he had frequently known the needle and the North Star to vary, having witnessed the fact with his own eyes on twenty previous occasions, and no harm to come of it. He invited the elder and more experienced seamen to make an accurate observation of the difference which already existed, which was quite a point of the compass,

and then to see, in the morning, if this difference had not increased in the same direction.

"This," he continued, "will be a certain sign, my friends, that the star is in motion, since we can all see that the compasses are just where they have been ever since we left Palos de Moguer. When one of two things is in motion, and it is certain which stands still, there can be no great difficulty in saying which is the uneasy one. Now, look thou here, Martin Martinez,"—who was one of the most factious of the disaffected—"words are of little use when men can prove their meaning by experiments like this. Thou seest two balls of spun-yarn on this windlass; well, it is wanted to be known which of them remains there, and which is taken away. I remove the smallest ball, thou perceivest, and the largest remains; from which it followeth, as only one can remain, and that one is the larger ball, why the smaller must be taken away. I hold no man fit to steer a caravel, by needle or by star, who will deny a thing that is proven as plainly and as simply as this!"

Martin Martinez, though a singularly disaffected man, was no logician; and, Sancho's oaths backing his demonstrations to the letter, his party soon became the most numerous. As there is nothing so encouraging to the dull-minded and discontented mutineer, as to perceive that he is of the strongest side, so is there nothing so discouraging as to find himself in the minority; and Sancho so far prevailed as to bring most of his fellows round to a belief in the expediency of waiting to ascertain the state of things in the morning, before they committed themselves by any act of rashness.

"Thou hast done well, Sancho," said Columbus, an hour later, when the mariner came secretly to make his nightly report of the state of feeling among the people. "Thou hast done well in all but these oaths, taken to prove that thou hast witnessed this phenomenon before. Much as I have navigated the earth, and careful as have been my observations, and ample as have been my means, never before have I known the needle to vary from its direction towards the North Star: and I think that which hath escaped my notice would not be apt to attract thine."

"You do me injustice, Señor Don Almirante, and have inflicted a wound touching my honesty, that a dobla only can cure—"

"Thou knowest, Sancho, that no one felt more alarm when the deviation of the needle was first noted, than thyself. So great, in sooth, was thy apprehension, that thou even refused to receive gold, a weakness of which thou art usually exceedingly innocent."

"When the deviation was first noted, your Excellency, this was true enough; for, not to attempt to mislead one who hath more penetration than befalleth ordinary men, I did fancy that our hopes of ever seeing Spain or St. Clara de Moguer, again, were so trifling as to make it of no great consequence who was admiral, and who a simple helmsman."

"And yet thou would'st now brazen it out, and deny thy terror! Didst thou not swear to thy fellows, that thou hadst often seen this deviation before; ay, even on as many as twenty occasions?"

"Well, Excellency, this is a proof that a cavalier may make a very capital viceroy and admiral, and know all about Cathay, without having the clearest notions of history! I told my shipmates, Don Christopher, that I had noted these changes before this night, and if tied to the stake to be burnt as a martyr, as I sometimes think will one day be the fate of all of us superfluously honest men, I would call on yourself, Señor Almirante, as the witness of the truth of what I had sworn to."

"Thou would'st, then, summon a most unfortunate witness, Sancho, since I neither practise false oaths myself, nor encourage their use in others."

"Don Luis de Bobadilla y Pedro de Muños, here, would then be my reliance," said the imperturbable Sancho; "for proof a man hath a right to, when wrongfully accused, and proof I will have. Your Excellency will please to remember that it was on the night of Saturday the 15th, that I first notified your worship of this very change, and that we are now at the night of Monday the 17th. I swore to twenty times noting this phenomenon, as it is called, in those eight-and-forty hours, when it would have been nearer

the truth had I said two hundred times. Santa Maria! I did nothing but note it for the first few hours!"

"Go to, Sancho, thy conscience hath its latitude as well as its longitude; but thou hast thy uses. Now, that thou understandest the reason of the variation, however, thou wilt encourage thy fellows, as well as keep up thy spirits."

"I make no question that it is all as your Excellency sayeth about the star's travelling," returned Sancho, "and it hath crossed my mind that it is possible we are nearer Cathay than we have thought; this movement being made by some evil-disposed spirits on purpose to make us lose the way."

"Go to thy hammock, knave, and bethink thee of thy sins; leaving the reasons of these mysteries to those who are better taught. There is thy dobla, and see that thou art discreet."

In the morning every being in the three caravels waited impatiently for the results of the new observations. As the wind continued favourable, though far from fresh, and a current was found setting to the westward, the vessels had made, in the course of twenty-four hours, more than a hundred and fifty miles, which rendered the increase in the variation perceptible, thus corroborating a prophecy of Columbus, that had been ventured on previous observation. So easily are the ignorant the dupes of the plausible, that this solution temporarily satisfied all doubts, and it was generally believed that the star had moved, while the needle remained true.

How far Columbus was misled by his own logic in this affair, is still a matter of doubt. That he resorted to deceptions which might be considered innocent, in order to keep up the courage of his companions, is seen in the fact of the false, or public reckoning; but there is no proof that this was one of the instances in which he had recourse to such means. No person of any science believed, even when the variation of the compass was unknown, that the needle pointed necessarily to the Polar Star; the coincidence in the direction of the magnetic needle and the position of the heavenly body, being thought accidental; and there is nothing extravagant in supposing that the admiral, who had the instrument in his possession, and was able to ascertain that

none of its virtue was visibly lost, while he could only reason from supposed analogy concerning the evolutions of the star, should imagine that a friend he had ever found so faithful, had now deserted him, leaving him disposed to throw the whole mystery of the phenomenon on the more distant dwellers in space. Two opinions have been ventured concerning the belief of the celebrated navigator, in the theory he advanced on this occasion; the one affirming, and the other denying his good faith in urging the doctrine he had laid down. Those who assert the latter, however, would seem to reason a little loosely themselves, their argument mainly resting on the improbability of a man like Columbus uttering so gross a scientific error, at a time when science itself knew no more of the existence of the phenomenon, than is known to-day of its cause. Still it is possible that the admiral may not have had any settled notions on the subject, even while he was half inclined to hope his explanation was correct; for it is certain, that, in the midst of the astronomical and geographical ignorance of his age, this extraordinary man had many accurate and sublime glimpses of truths that were still in embryo as respected their developement and demonstration by the lights of precise and inductive reasoning.

Fortunately, if the light brought with it the means of ascertaining with certainty the variation of the needle, it also brought the means of perceiving that the sea was still covered with weeds, and other signs that were thought to be encouraging as connected with the vicinity of land. The current being now in the same direction as the wind, the surface of the ocean was literally as smooth as that of an inland sheet of water, and the vessels were enabled to sail, without danger, within a few fathoms of each other.

"This weed, Señor Almirante," called out the elder Pinzon, "hath the appearance of that which groweth on the banks of streams, and I doubt, that we are near to the mouth of some exceeding great river!"

"This may be so," returned Columbus, "than which there can be no more certain sign than may be found in the taste of the water. Let a bucket be drawn, that we may know."

While Pepe was busied in executing this order, waiting

until the vessel had passed through a large body of weeds for that purpose, the quick eye of the admiral detected a crab struggling on the surface of the fresh-looking plants, and he called to the helmsman in sufficient season, to enable him so far to vary his course, as to allow the animal to be taken.

"Here is a most precious prize, good Martin Alonzo," said Columbus, holding the crab between a finger and thumb, that the other might see it. "These animals are never known to go farther than some eighty leagues from the land; and see, Señor, yonder is one of the white tropic birds, which, it is said, never sleep on the water! Truly, God favoureth us; and what rendereth all these tokens more grateful, is the circumstance of their coming from the west, the hidden, unknown, mysterious west!"

A common shout burst from the crews at the appearance of these signs, and again the beings who lately had been on the verge of despair, were buoyed up with hope, and ready to see propitious omens in even the most common occurrences of the ocean. All the vessels had hauled up buckets of water, and fifty mouths were immediately wet with the brine; and so general was the infatuation, that every man declared the sea far less salt than usual. So complete, indeed, was the delusion created by these cheerful expectations, and so thoroughly had all concern in connexion with the moving star been removed by the sophism of Sancho, that even Columbus, habitually so wary, so reasoning, so calm, amid his loftiest views, yielded to his native enthusiasm, and fancied that he was about to discover some vast island placed midway between Asia and Europe; an honour not to be despised, though it fell so far short of his higher expectations.

"Truly, friend Martin Alonzo," he said, "this water seemeth to have less of the savour of the sea, than is customary at a distance from the outlet of large rivers!"

"My palate telleth the same tale, Señor Almirante. As a further sign, the Niña hath struck another tunny, and her people are at this moment hoisting it in."

Shout succeeded shout, as each new encouraging proof appeared; and the admiral, yielding to the ardour of the crews, ordered sail to be pressed on all the vessels, that

each might endeavour to outstrip the others, in the hope of being the first to discover the expected island. This strife soon separated the caravels, the Pinta easily outsailing the other two, while the Santa Maria and the Niña came on more slowly, in her rear. All was gaiety and mirth, the livelong day, on board those isolated vessels, that, unknown to those they held, were navigating the middle of the Atlantic, with horizon extending beyond horizon, without change in the watery boundary, as circle would form without circle, on the same element, were a vast mass of solid matter suddenly dropped into the sea.

CHAPTER III.

"The sails were fill'd, and fair the light winds blew,
As glad to waft him from his native home;
And fast the white rocks faded from his view,
And soon were lost in circumambient foam:
And then, it may be, of his wish to roam
Repented he, but in his bosom slept
The silent thought, nor from his lips did come
One word of wail, whilst others sate and wept,
And to the reckless gales unmanly moaning kept."

Childe Harold's Pilgrimage.

As night drew near, the Pinta shortened sail, permitting her consorts to close. All eyes now turned anxiously to the west, where it was hoped that land might at any moment appear. The last tint, however, vanished from the horizon, and darkness enveloped the ocean without bringing any material change. The wind still blew a pleasant breeze from the south-east, and the surface of the ocean offered little more inequality than is usually met on the bosoms of large rivers. The compasses showed a slightly increasing deviation from their old coincidence with the polar star, and no one doubted, any longer, that the fault was in the heavenly body. All this time the vessels were

getting to the southward, steering in fact west and by south, when they thought they were steering west,—a circumstance that alone prevented Columbus from first reaching the coast of Georgia, or that of the Carolinas, since, had he missed the Bermudas, the current of the Gulf Stream, meeting him on his weather bow, he would have infallibly been set well to the northward, as he neared the continent.

The night passed as usual, and at noon of the 17th, or at the termination of the nautical day, the fleet had left another long track of ocean between it and the old world. The weeds were disappearing, and with them the tunny-fish, which were in truth feeding on the products of shoals that mounted several thousands of feet nearer to the surface of the water, than was the case with the general bed of the Atlantic. The vessels usually kept near each other at noon, in order to compare their observations; but the Pinta, which, like a swift steed, was with difficulty restrained, shot ahead, until the middle of the afternoon, when, as usual, she lay-by for the admiral to close. As the Santa Maria came sweeping on, the elder Pinzon stood, cap in hand, ready to speak her, waiting only for her to come within sound of his voice.

"God increaseth the signs of land, and the motives of encouragement, Señor Don Christopher;" he called out, cheerfully, while the Pinta filled her sails in order to keep way with the admiral. "We have seen large flights of birds ahead, and the clouds at the north look heavy and dense, as if hovering over some island, or continent, in that quarter."

"Thou art a welcome messenger, worthy Martin Alonzo, though I wish thee to remember, that the most I expect to meet with in this longitude is some cluster of pleasant islands, Asia being yet several days' sail more distant. As the night approacheth, thou wilt see thy clouds take still more of the form of the land, and I doubt that groups may be found on each side of us; but our high destination is Cathay, and men with such an object before them, may not turn aside for any lesser errand."

"Have I your leave, noble admiral, to push ahead in the Pinta, that our eyes may first be greeted with the grateful sight of Asia? I nothing doubt of seeing it ere morning."

"Go, of God's sake, good pilot, if thou thinkest this; though I warn thee, that no continent can yet meet thine eyes. Nevertheless, as any land in these distant and unknown seas must be a discovery, and bring credit on Castile, as well as on ourselves, he who first perceiveth it will merit the reward. Thou, or any one else, hath my full permission to discover islands, or continents, in thousands."

The people laughed at this sally, for the light-hearted are easily excited to mirth; and then the Pinta shot ahead. As the sun set, she was seen again lying-to for her companions—a dark speck on the rainbow colours of the glorious sky. The horizon at the north presented masses of clouds, in which it was not difficult to fancy the summits of ragged mountains, receding valleys, with headlands, and promontories, foreshortened by distance.

The following day the wind baffled, for the first time since encountering the trades; and the clouds collected over-head, dispersing drizzling showers on the navigators. The vessels now lay near each other, and conversation flew from one to the other—boats passing and repassing, constantly.

"I have come, Señor Almirante," said the elder Pinzon, as he reached the deck of the Santa Maria, "at the united request of my people, to beg that we may steer to the north, in quest of land, islands and continent, that no doubt lie there, and thus crown this great enterprise with the glory that is due to our illustrious sovereigns, and your own forethought."

"The wish is just, good Martin Alonzo, and fairly expressed, but it may not be granted. That we should make creditable discoveries, by thus steering, is highly probable, but in so doing we should fall far short of our aim. Cathay and the Great Khan still lie west; and we are here, not to add another group, like the Canaries, or the Azores, to the knowledge of man, but to complete the circle of the earth, and to open the way for the setting up of the cross in the regions that have so long been the property of infidels."

"Hast thou nothing to say, Señor de Muños, in support of our petition? Thou hast favour with his Excellency, and may prevail on him to grant us this small behest?"

"To tell thee the truth, good Martin Alonzo," answered

Luis, with more of the indifference of manner that might have been expected from the grandee to the pilot, than the respect that would become the secretary to the second person of the expedition—" to tell thee truth, good Martin Alonzo, my heart is so set on the conversion of the Great Khan, that I wish not to turn either to the right or left, until that glorious achievement be sufficiently secure. I have observed that Satan effecteth little against those who keep in the direct path, while his success with those who turn aside is so material, as to people his dominions with errants."

" Is there no hope, noble admiral? and must we quit all these cheering signs, without endeavouring to trace them to some advantageous conclusion?"

" I see no better course, worthy friend. This rain indicateth land; also this calm; and here is a visiter that denoteth more than either — yonder, in the direction of thy Pinta, where it seemeth disposed to rest its wings."

Pinzon, and all near him, turned, and to their common delight and astonishment they saw a pelican, with extended wings that spread for ten feet, sailing a few fathoms above the sea, and apparently aiming at the vessel named. The adventurous bird, however, as if disdaining to visit one of inferior rank, passed the Pinta, and, sweeping up grandly towards the admiral, alighted on a yard of the Santa Maria.

" If this be not a certain sign of the vicinity of land," said Columbus, gravely, " it is what is far better, a sure omen that God is with us. He is sending these encouraging calls to confirm us in our intention to serve him, and to persevere to the end. Never before, Martin Alonzo, have I seen a bird of this species a day's sail from the shore!"

" Such is my experience too, noble admiral; and, with you, I look upon this visit as a most propitious omen. May it not be a hint to turn aside, and to look farther in this quarter?"

" I accept it not as such, but rather as a motive to proceed. At our return from the Indies we may examine this part of the ocean with greater scrutiny, though I shall think nought accomplished until India be fairly reached, and India is still hundreds of leagues distant. As the time is favourable, however, we will call together our pilots, and see how each man placeth his vessel on the chart."

At this suggestion, all the navigators assembled on board the Santa Maria, and each man made his calculations, sticking a pin in the rude chart—rude as to accuracy, but beautiful as to execution—that the admiral, with the lights he then possessed, had made of the Atlantic ocean. Viconte Yañez, and his companions of the Niña, placed their pin most in advance, after measuring off four hundred and forty marine leagues from Gomera. Martin Alonzo varied a little from this, setting his pin some twenty leagues farther east. When it was the turn of Columbus, he stuck a pin twenty leagues still short of that of Martin Alonzo, his companions having, to all appearance, like less skilful calculators, thus much advanced ahead of their true distance. It was then determined what was to be stated to the crews, and the pilots returned to their respective vessels.

It would seem that Columbus really believed he was then passing between islands, and his historian, Las Casas, affirms that he was actually right in his conjecture; but if islands ever existed in that part of the ocean, they have long since disappeared; a phenomenon which, while it is not impossible, can scarcely be deemed probable. It is said that breakers have been seen, even within the present century, in this vicinity, and it is not unlikely that extensive banks do exist, though Columbus found no bottom with two hundred fathoms of line. The great collection of weeds, is a fact authenticated by some of the oldest records of human investigations, and is most probably owing to some effect of the currents which has a tendency to bring about such an end; while the birds must be considered as stragglers lured from their usual haunts by the food that would be apt to be collected by the union of weeds and fish. Aquatic birds can always rest on the water, and the animal that can wing its way through the air at the rate of thirty or even fifty miles the hour, needs only sufficient strength, to cross the entire Atlantic in four days and nights.

Notwithstanding all these cheering signs, the different crews soon began to feel again the weight of a renewed despondency. Sancho, who was in constant but secret communication with the admiral, kept the latter properly advised of the state of the people, and reported that more

murmurs than usual prevailed, the men having passed again, by the suddenness of the reaction, from the most elastic hope, nearly to the verge of despair. This fact was told Columbus just at sunset on the evening of the 20th, or on that of the eleventh day after the fleet lost sight of land, and while the seaman was affecting to be busy on the poop, where he made most of his communications.

"They complain, your Excellency," continued Sancho, "of the smoothness of the water; and they say that when the winds blow at all, in these seas, they come only from the eastward, having no power to blow from any other quarter. The calms, they think, prove that we are getting into a part of the ocean where there is no wind; and the east winds, they fancy, are sent by Providence to drive those there who have displeased Heaven by a curiosity that it was never intended that any who wear beards should possess."

"Do thou encourage them, Sancho, by reminding the poor fellows that calms prevail, at times, in all seas; and, as for the east winds, is it not well known that they blow from off the African shores, in low latitudes, at all seasons of the year, following the sun in his daily track around the earth? I trust thou hast none of this silly apprehension?"

"I endeavour to keep a stout heart, Señor Don Almirante, having no one before me to disgrace, and leaving no one behind me to mourn over my loss. Still, I should like to hear a little about the riches of those distant lands, as I find the thoughts of their gold and precious stones have a sort of religious charm over my weakness, when I begin to muse upon Moguer and its good cheer."

"Go to, knave, thy appetite for money is insatiable; take yet another dobla, and as thou gazest on it thou may'st fancy what thou wilt of the coin of the Great Khan; resting certain that so great a monarch is not without gold, any more than he is probably without the disposition to part with it, when there is occasion."

Sancho received his fee, and left the poop to Columbus and our hero.

"These ups and downs among the knaves," said Luis, impatiently, "were best quelled, Señor, by an application of the flat of the sword, or, at need, of its edge."

"This may not be, my young friend, without at least far more occasion than yet existeth for the severity. Think not that I have passed so many years of my life in soliciting the means to effect so great a purpose, and have got this far on my way, in unknown seas, with a disposition to be easily turned aside from my purpose. But God hath not created all alike; neither hath he afforded equal chances for knowledge to the peasant and the noble. I have vexed my spirit too often, with arguments on this very subject, with the great and learned, not to bear a little with the ignorance of the vulgar. Fancy how much fear would have quickened the wits of the sages of Salamanca, had our discussion been held in the middle of the Atlantic, where man never had been, and whence no eyes but those of logic and science, could discover a safe passage."

"This is most true, Señor Almirante; and yet, methinks the knights that were of your antagonists should not have been wholly unmanned by fear. What danger have we here? this is the wide ocean, it is true, and we are no doubt distant some hundreds of leagues from the known islands, but we are not the less safe. By San Pedro! I have seen more lives lost in a single onset of the Moors, than these caravels could hold in bodies, and blood enough spilt to float them!"

"The dangers our people dread may be less turbulent than those of a Moorish fray, Don Luis, but they are not the less terrible. Where is the spring that is to furnish water to the parched lip, when our stores shall fail, and where the field to give us its bread and nourishment? It is a fearful thing to be brought down to the dregs of life, by the failure of food and water, on the surface of the wide ocean, dying by inches, often without the consolations of the church, and ever without Christian sepulture. These are the fancies of the seaman, and he is only to be driven from them violently when duty demands extreme remedies for his disease."

"To me it seemeth, Don Christopher, that it will be time to reason thus, when our casks are drained, and the last biscuit is broken. Until then, I ask leave of your Excellency to apply the necessary logic to the *outside* of the

heads of these varlets, instead of their insides, of which I much question the capacity to hold any good."

Columbus too well understood the hot nature of the young noble to make a serious reply; and they both stood sometime leaning against the mizen-mast, watching the scene before them, and musing on the chances of their situation. It was night, and the figures of the watch, on the deck beneath, were visible only by a light that rendered it difficult to distinguish countenances. The men were grouped; and it was evident by the low but eager tones in which they conversed, that they discussed matters connected with the calm, and the risks they ran. The outlines of the Pinta and Niña were visible, beneath a firmament that was studded with brilliants, their lazy sails hanging in festoons, like the drapery of curtains, and their black hulls were as stationary, as if they both lay moored in one of the rivers of Spain. It was a bland and gentle night, but the immensity of the solitude, the deep calm of the slumbering ocean, and even the occasional creaking of a spar, by recalling to the mind the actual presence of vessels so situated, rendered the scene solemn, almost to sublimity.

"Dost thou detect aught fluttering in the rigging, Luis?" the admiral cautiously inquired. "My ear deceiveth me, or I hear something on the wing. The sounds, moreover, are quick and slight, like those produced by birds of indifferent size."

"Don Christopher, you are right. There are little creatures perched on the upper yards, and that of a size like the smaller songsters of the land."

"Hark!" interrupted the admiral. "That is a joyous note, and of such a melody as might be met in one of the orange groves of Seville, itself! God be praised for this sign of the extent and unity of his kingdom, since land cannot well be distant, when creatures, gentle and frail as these, have so lately taken their flight from it!"

The presence of these birds soon became known to all on deck, and their songs brought more comfort than the most able mathematical demonstration, even though founded on modern learning, could have produced on the sensitive feelings of the common men.

"I told thee, land was near," cried Sancho, turning with

exultation to Martin Martinez, his constant disputant;—"here thou hast the proof of it, in a manner that none but the traitor will deny. Thou hearest the songs of orchard birds—notes that would never come from the throats of the tired; and which sound as gaily as if the dear little feathered rogues were pecking at a fig or a grape in a field of Spain.

"Sancho is right!" exclaimed the seamen. "The air savours of land, too—and the sea hath a look of the land; and God is with us—blessed be his Holy name—and honour to our lord the king, and to our gracious mistress, Doña Isabella!"

From this moment concern seemed to leave the vessel, again. It was thought, even by the admiral himself, that the presence of birds so small, and which were judged to be so feeble of wing, was an unerring evidence that land was nigh; and land, too, of generous productions, and a mild, gentle climate; for these warblers, like the softer sex of the human family, best love scenes that most favour their gentle propensities and delicate habits.

Investigation has since proved, that, in this particular, however plausible the grounds of error, Columbus was deceived. Men often mistake the powers of the inferior animals of creation, and at other times they overrate the extent of their instinct. In point of fact, a bird of light weight would be less liable to perish on the ocean, and in that low latitude, than a bird of more size, neither being aquatic. The sea-weed itself would furnish resting-places out of number for the smaller animals, and in some instances it would probably furnish food. That birds, purely of the land, should take long flights at sea, is certainly improbable; but, apart from the consequence of gales, which often force even that heavy-winged animal the owl, hundreds of miles from the land, instinct is not infallible; whales being frequently found embayed in shallow waters, and birds sailing beyond the just limits of their habits. Whatever may have been the cause of the opportune appearance of these little inhabitants of the orchard, on the spars of the Santa Maria, the effect was of the most auspicious kind on the spirits of the men. As long as they sang, no amateurs ever listened to the most brilliant passages from the orchestra, with

greater delight than those rude seamen listened to their warbling, and while they slept it was with a security that had its existence in veneration and gratitude. The songs were renewed with the dawn, shortly after which the whole went off in a body, taking their flight towards the south-west. The next day brought a calm, and then an air so light, that the vessels could with difficulty make their way through the dense masses of weeds that actually gave the ocean the appearance of vast inundated meadows. The current was now found to be from the west, and shortly after day-light a new source of alarm was reported by Sancho.

"The people have got a notion in their heads, Señor Almirante, which partaketh so much of the marvellous, that it findeth exceeding favour with such as love miracles more than they love God. Martin Martinez, who is a philosopher in the way of terror, maintaineth that this sea into which we seem to be entering deeper and deeper, lieth over sunken islands, and that the weeds, which it would be idle to deny grow more abundant as we proceed, will shortly get to be so plentiful on the surface of the water, that the caravels will become unable to advance, or to retreat."

"Doth Martin find any to believe this silly notion?"

"Señor Don Almirante, he doth; and for the plain reason that it is easier to find those who are ready to believe an absurdity, than to find those who will only believe truth. But the man is backed by some unlucky chances, that must come of the Powers of Darkness, more particularly as they can have no great wish to see your Excellency reach Cathay, with the intention of making a Christian of the Great Khan, and of planting the tree of the cross in his dominions. This calm sorely troubleth many, moreover, and the birds are beginning to be looked upon as creatures sent by Satan himself, to lead us whither we can never return. Some even believe we shall tread on shoals, and lie for ever stranded wrecks in the midst of the wide ocean!"

"Go bid the men prepare to sound; I will show them the folly of this idea, at least; and see that all are summoned to witness the experiment."

Columbus now repeated this order to the pilots, and the deep-sea was let go, in the usual manner. Fathom after fathom of the line glided over the rail, the lead taking its unerring way towards the bottom, until so little was left as to compel the downward course to be arrested.

"Ye see, my friends, that we are yet full two hundred fathoms from the shoals ye so much dread, and as much more as the sea is deeper than our measurement. Lo! yonder, too, is a whale, spouting the water before him, a creature never seen, except on the coasts of large islands, or continents."

This appeal of Columbus, which was in conformity with the notions of the day, had its weight—his crew being naturally most under the influence of notions that were popular. It is now known, however, that whales frequent those parts of the ocean where their food is most abundant; and one of the best grounds for taking them, of late years, has been what is called the the False Brazil Banks, which lie near the centre of the ocean. In a word, all those signs, that were connected with the movements of birds and fishes, and which appear to have had so much effect, not only on the common men of this great enterprise, but on Columbus himself, were of far less real importance than was then believed; navigators being so little accustomed to venture far from the land themselves, that they were not duly acquainted with the mysteries of the open ocean.

Notwithstanding the moments of cheerfulness and hope that intervened, distrust and apprehension were fast getting to be again the prevailing feelings among the mariners. Those who had been most disaffected from the first, seized every occasion to increase these apprehensions; and when the sun arose, Saturday, September 22d, on a calm sea, there were not a few in the vessels who were disposed to unite in making another demand on the admiral to turn the heads of the caravels towards the east.

"We have come some hundreds of leagues before a fair wind, into a sea that is entirely unknown to man, until we have reached a part of the ocean where the winds seem altogether to fail us, and where there is danger of our being bound up in immovable weeds, or stranded on sunken islands, without the means of procuring food or water!"

Arguments like these, were suited to an age in which even the most learned were obliged to grope their way to accurate knowledge, through the mists of superstition and ignorance, and in which it was a prevailing weakness to put faith, on the one hand, in visible proofs of the miraculous power of God, and, on the other, in substantial evidences of the ascendency of evil spirits, as they were permitted to affect the temporal affairs of those they persecuted.

It was, therefore, most fortunate for the success of the expedition, that a light breeze sprang up from the southward and westward, in the early part of the day just mentioned, enabling the vessels to gather way, and to move beyond the vast fields of weeds, that equally obstructed the progress of the caravels, and awakened the fears of their people. As it was an object to get clear of the floating obstacles that surrounded the vessels, the first large opening that offered was entered, and then the fleet was brought close upon a wind, heading as near as possible to the desired course. Columbus now believed himself to be steering west-north-west, when, in fact, he was sailing in a direction far nearer to his true course, than when his ships headed west, by compass; the departure from the desired line of sailing, being owing to the variation in the needle. This circumstance alone, would seem to establish the fact, that Columbus believed in his own theory of the moving star, since he would hardly have steered west-and-by-south-half-south, with a fair wind, for many days in succession, as he is known to have done, when it was his strongest wish to proceed directly west. He was now heading up, within half a point of the latter course, though he and all with him, fancied they were running off nearly two points to leeward of the so much desired direction.

But these little variations were trifles as compared with the advantage that the admiral obtained over the fears of his followers by the shift of the wind, and the liberation from the weeds. By the first, the men saw a proof that the breezes did not always blow from the same quarter; and by the last, they ascertained that they had not actually reached a point where the ocean had become impassable. Although the wind was now favourable to return to the

Canaries, no one any longer demanded that such a course should be adopted, so apt are we all to desire that which appears to be denied to us, and so ready to despise that which lies perfectly at our disposal.

This, indeed, was a moment when the feelings of the people appeared to be as variable as the light and baffling winds themselves. The Saturday passed away, in the manner just mentioned, the vessels once more entering into large fields of weeds, just as the sun set. When the light returned, the airs headed them off to north-west and north-west-by-north, by compass, which was, in truth, steering north-west-by-west-half-west, and north-west-half-west. Birds abounded again, among which were a turtle-dove, and many living crabs were seen crawling among the weeds. All these signs would have encouraged the common men, had they not already so often proved deceptive.

"Señor," said Martin Martinez, to the admiral, when Columbus went among the crew to raise their drooping spirits, "we know not what to think! For days, did the wind blow in the same direction, leading us on, as it might be, to our ruin; and then it hath deserted us in such a sea, as mariners in the Santa Maria never before saw. A sea, looking like meadows on a river side, and which wanteth only kine and cow-herds, to be mistaken for fields a little overflowed by a rise of the water, is a fearful thing!"

"Thy meadows are the weeds of the ocean, and prove the richness of the nature that hath produced them; while thy breezes from the east, are what all who have ever made the Guinea voyage, well know to exist in latitudes so low. I see nought in either to alarm a bold seaman; and as for the bottom, ye all know it hath not yet been found by many a long and weary fathom of line. Pepe, thou hast none of these weaknesses; but hast set thy heart on Cathay, and a sight of the Great Khan?"

"Señor Almirante, as I swore to Monica, so do I swear to your Excellency; and that is to be true and obedient. If the cross is to be raised among the infidels, my hand shall not be backward in doing its share towards the holy act. Still, Señor, none of us like this long unnatural calm. Here is an ocean that hath no waves, but a surface so smooth that we much distrust whether the waters obey

the same laws, as they are known to do near Spain; for never before have I beheld a sea that hath so much the air of the dead! May it not be, Señor, that God hath placed a belt of this calm and stagnant water around the outer edges of the earth, in order to prevent the unheedy from looking into some of his sacred secrets?"

"Thy reasoning hath, at least, a savour of religion; and, though faulty, can scarce be condemned. God hath placed man on this earth, Pepe, to be its master, and to serve him by extending the dominion of his church, as well as by turning to the best account all the numberless blessings that accompany the great gift. As to the limits, of which thou speakest, they exist only in idea, the earth being a sphere, or a ball, to which there are no other edges than those thou seest everywhere on its surface."

"And as for what Martin saith," put in Sancho, who was never at fault for a fact, or for a reason, "concerning the winds, and the weeds, and the calms, I can only wonder where a seaman of his years hath been navigating so long, that these things should be novelties. To me, all this is as common as dish-water at Moguer, and so much a matter of course, that I should not have remarked it, but for the whinings of Martin and his fellows. When the Santa Catalina made the voyage to that far-off region, Ireland, we landed on the sea-weed, a distance of half a league or so from the coast; and as for the wind, it blew regularly four weeks from one quarter, and four weeks from the other; after which the people of the country said it would blow four weeks each way, transversely; but we did not remain long enough in those seas to enable me to swear to the two last facts."

"Hast thou not heard of shoals so wide that a caravel could never find its way out of them, if it once entered?" demanded Martinez, fiercely, for much addicted to gross exaggerations himself, he little liked to be outdone; "and do not these weeds bespeak our near approach to such a danger, when the weeds themselves often are so closely packed as to come near to stop the ship?"

"Enough of this," said the admiral; "at times we have weeds, and then we are altogether free from them; these changes are owing to the currents; no doubt as soon as we

have passed this meridian, we shall come to clear water again."

"But the calm, Señor Almirante," exclaimed a dozen voices. "This unnatural smoothness of the ocean frighteneth us! — never before did we see water so stagnant and immoveable!"

"Call ye this stagnant and immoveable?" exclaimed the admiral. "Nature herself arises to reproach your senseless fears, and to contradict your mistaken reasoning, by her own signs and portents!"

This was said as the Santa Maria's bows rose on a long low swell, every spar creaking at the motion, and the whole hull heaving and setting as the billow passed beneath it, washing the sides of the ship from the water-line to its channels. At this moment there was not even a breath of air, and the seamen gazed about them with an astonishment that was increased and rendered extreme by dread. The ship had scarcely settled heavily into the long trough, when a second wave lifted her again forward, and billow succeeded billow, each successive wave increasing in height, until the entire ocean was undulating, though only marked at distant intervals, and that slightly, by the foam of crests or combing seas. It took half an hour to bring this phenomenon up to its height, when all three vessels were wallowing in the seas, as mariners term it, their hulls falling off helplessly into the troughs, until the water fairly spouted from their low scuppers, as each rose by her buoyancy from some roll deeper than common. Fancying that this occurrence promised to be either a source of new alarm, or a means of appeasing the old one, Columbus took early measures to turn it to account, in the latter mode. Causing all the crew to assemble at the break of the poop, he addressed them, briefly, in the following words:

"Ye see, men, that your late fears about the stagnant ocean are rebuked, in this sudden manner, as it might be, by the hand of God himself, proving, beyond dispute, that no danger is to be apprehended from that source. I might impose on your ignorance, and insist that this sudden rising of the sea is a miracle wrought to sustain me against your rebellious repinings and unthinking alarms; but the cause in which I am engaged needs no support of this nature, that

doth not truly come from heaven. The calms, and the smoothness of the water, and even the weeds of which ye complain, come from the vicinity of some great body of land; I think not a continent, as that must lie still farther west, but of islands, either so large or so numerous, as to make a far-extended lee; while these swells are probably the evidence of wind at a distance, which hath driven up the ocean into mountainous waves, such as we often see them, and which send out their dying efforts, even beyond the limits of the gale. I do not say that this intervention, to appease your fears, doth not come of God, in whose hands I am; for this last do I fully believe, and for it am I fully grateful; but it cometh through the agencies of nature, and can in no sense be deemed providential, except as it demonstrateth the continuance of the divine care, as well as its surpassing goodness. Go then, and be tranquil. Remember if Spain be far behind ye, that Cathay now lieth at no great distance before ye; that each hour shorteneth that distance, as well as the time necessary to reach our goal. He that remaineth true and faithful, shall not repent his confidence; while he who unnecessarily disturbeth either himself or others, with silly doubts, may look forward to an exercise of authority that shall maintain the rights of their Highnesses to the duty of all their servants."

We record this speech of the great navigator with so much the more pleasure, as it goes fully to establish the fact that he did not believe the sudden rising of the seas, on this occasion, was owing to a direct miracle, as some of the historians and biographers seem inclined to believe; but rather to a providential interference of Divine Power, through natural means, in order to protect him against the consequences of the blind apprehensions of his followers. It is not easy, indeed, to suppose, that a seaman as experienced as Columbus, could be ignorant of the natural cause of a circumstance so very common on the ocean, that those who dwell on its coasts have frequent occasion to witness its occurrence.

CHAPTER IV.

"'*Ora pro nobis, Mater!*'—what a spell
Was in those notes, with day's last glory dying
On the flush'd waters—seem'd they not to swell
From the far dust, wherein my sires were lying
With crucifix and sword?—Oh! yet how clear
Comes their reproachful sweetness to my ear!
'*Ora*'—with all the purple waves replying,
All my youth's visions rising in the strain—
And I had thought it much to bear the rack and chain!"

The Forest Sanctuary.

It may now be well to recapitulate, and to let the reader distinctly know how far the adventurers had actually advanced into the unknown waters of the Atlantic; what was their real, and what their supposed position. As has been seen, from the time of quitting Gomera, the admiral kept two reckonings, one intended for his own government, which came as near the truth as the imperfect means of the science of navigation that were then in use would allow, and another that was freely exhibited to the crew, and was purposely miscalculated in order to prevent alarm, on account of the distance that had been passed. As Columbus believed himself to be employed in the service of God, this act of deception would be thought a species of pious fraud, in that devout age; and it is by no means probable, that it gave the conscience of the navigator any trouble, since churchmen, even, did not hesitate always about buttressing the walls of faith by means still less justifiable.

The long calms and light head-winds had prevented the vessels from making much progress for the few last days; and, by estimating the distance that was subsequently run in a course but a little south of west, it appears, notwithstanding all the encouraging signs of birds, fishes, calms, and smooth water, that on the morning of Monday, September 24th, or that of the fifteenth day after losing sight of Ferro, the expedition was about half-way across the Atlantic, counting from continent to continent, on the

parallel of about 31 or 32 degrees of north latitude. The circumstance of the vessels being so far north of the Canaries, when it is known that they had been running most of the time west, a little southerly, must be imputed to the course steered in the scant winds, and perhaps to the general set of the currents. With this brief explanation, we return to the daily progress of the ships.

The influence of the trades was once more felt, though in a very slight degree, in the course of the twenty-four hours that succeeded the day of the "miraculous seas," and the vessels again headed west by compass Birds were seen as usual, among which was a pelican. The whole progress of the vessels was less than fifty miles, a distance that was lessened, as usual, in the public reckoning.

The morning of the 25th was calm, but the wind returned, a steady gentle breeze from the south-east, when the day was far advanced, the caravels passing most of the hours of light floating near each other, in a lazy indolence, or barely stirring the water with their stems, at a rate little, if any, exceeding that of a mile an hour.

The Pinta kept near the Santa Maria, and the officers and crews of the two vessels conversed freely with each other, concerning their hopes and situation. Columbus listened to these dialogues for a long time, endeavouring to collect the predominant feeling from the more guarded expressions that were thus publicly delivered, and watching each turn of the expressions with jealous vigilance. At length it struck him that the occasion was favourable to producing a good effect on the spirits of his followers.

"What hast thou thought of the chart I sent thee three days since, good Martin Alonzo," called out the admiral: "Dost thou see in it aught to satisfy thee that we are approaching the Indies, and that our time of trial draweth rapidly to an end?"

At the first sound of the admiral's voice, every syllable was hushed among the people; for, in spite of their discontent, and their disposition even to rise against him, in their extremity, Columbus had succeeded in creating a profound respect for his judgment and his person among all his followers.

"'T is a rare and well-designed chart, Señor Don Christopher," answered the master of the Pinta, "and doth a fair credit to him who hath copied and enlarged, as well as to him who first projected it. I doubt that it is the work of some learned scholar, that hath united the opinions of all the greater navigators in his map."

"The original came from one Paul Toscanelli, a learned Tuscan, who dwelleth at Firenze in that country; a man of exceeding knowledge, and of an industry in investigation that putteth idleness to shame. Accompanying the chart he sent a missive that hath much profound and learned matter on the subject of the Indies, and touching those islands that thou seest laid down with so much particularity. In that letter he speaketh of divers places, as being so many wonderful exemplars of the power of man; more especially of the port of Zaiton, which sendeth forth no less than a hundred ships yearly, loaded with the single product of the pepper-tree. He saith, moreover, that an ambassador came to the Holy Father, in the time of Eugenius IV., of blessed memory, to express the desire of the Great Khan, which meaneth King of Kings, in the dialect of those regions, to be on friendly terms with the Christians of the west, as we were then termed; but of the east, as will shortly be our designation in that part of the world."

"This is surprising, Señor!" exclaimed Pinzon; "how is it known, or is it known at all, of a certainty?"

"Beyond a question; since Paul stateth, in his missive, that he saw much of this same ambassador, living greatly in his society, Eugenius deceasing as lately as 1477. From the ambassador, no doubt a wise and grave personage, since no other would have been sent so far on a mission to the Head of the Church;—from this discreet person, then, did Toscanelli gain much pleasant information concerning the populousness and vast extent of those distant countries, the gorgeousness of the palaces, and the glorious beauty of the cities. He spoke of one town, in particular, that surpasseth all others of the known world; and of a single river that hath two hundred noble cities on its own banks, with marble bridges spanning the stream. The chart before thee, Martin Alonzo, showeth that the exact distance

from Lisbon to the city of Quisay is just three thousand nine hundred miles of Italy, or about a thousand leagues, steering always in a due-west direction."*

"And doth the learned Tuscan say aught of the riches of those countries?" demanded Master Alonzo—a question that caused all within hearing to prick up their ears, afresh.

"That doth he, and in these precise and impressive words—'This is a noble country,' observed the learned Paul, in his missive, 'and ought to be explored by us, on account of its great riches, and the quantity of gold, silver, and precious stones, which might be obtained there.' He moreover describeth Quisay as being five-and-thirty leagues in circuit, and addeth that its name in the Castilian, is 'the City of Heaven.'"

"In which case," muttered Sancho, though in a tone so low that no one but Pepe heard him, "there is little need of our bearing thither the cross, which was intended for the benefit of man, and not of paradise."

"I see here two large islands, Señor Almirante," continued Pinzon, keeping his eyes on the chart, "one of which is called Antilla, and the other is the Cipango of which your Excellency so often speaketh."

"Even so, good Martin Alonzo, and thou also seest that they are laid down with a precision that must prevent any experienced navigator from missing his way, when in pursuit of them. These islands lie just two hundred and twenty-five leagues asunder."

"According to our reckoning, here, in the Pinta, noble Admiral, we cannot, then, be far from Cipango at this very moment."

"It would so seem by the reckonings, though I somewhat doubt their justness. It is a common error of pilots to run ahead of their reckonings, but in this instance, apprehension hath brought ye behind them. Cipango lieth many days' sail from the continent of Asia, and cannot, therefore, be far from this spot; still the currents have been

* NOTE.—It is worthy of remark that the city of Philadelphia stands, as near as may be, in the position that the honest Paul Toscanelli supposed to have been occupied by "the famous city of Quisay."

adverse, and I doubt that it will be found that we are as near this island, good Martin Alonzo, as thou and thy companions imagine. Let the chart be returned, and I will trace our actual position on it, that all may see what reason there is to despond, and what reason to rejoice."

Pinzon now took the chart, rolled it together carefully, attached a light weight, and securing the whole with the end of a log-line, he hove it on board the Santa Maria, as a seaman makes a cast with the lead. So near were the vessels at the moment, that this communication was made without any difficulty; after which, the Pinta, letting fall an additional sail or two, flapped slowly ahead, her superiority, particularly in light winds, being at all times apparent.

Columbus now caused the chart to be spread over a table on the poop, and invited all who chose to draw near, in order that they might, with their own eyes, see the precise spot on the ocean where the admiral supposed the vessels to be. As each day's work was accurately laid down, and measured on the chart, by one as expert as the great navigator himself, there is little question that he succeeded in showing his people, as near as might be, and subject to the deduction in distance that was intentionally made, the longitude and latitude to which the expedition had then reached; and as this brought them quite near those islands which were believed to lie east of the continent of Asia, this tangible proof of their progress had far more effect than any demonstration that depended on abstract reasoning, even when grounded on premises that were true; most men submitting sooner to the authority of the senses, than to the influence of the mere mind. The seamen did not stop to inquire how it was settled that Cipango lay in the precise place where it had been projected on this famous chart, but seeing it there, in black and white, they were disposed to believe it was really in the spot it appeared to be; and, as Columbus's reputation for keeping a ship's reckoning far surpassed that of any other navigator in the fleet, the facts were held to be established. Great was the joy, in consequence; and the minds of the people again passed from the verge of despair to an excess and illusion of hope, that was raised only to be disappointed.

That Columbus was sincere in all that related to this new delusion, with the exception of the calculated reduction of the true distance, is beyond a doubt. In common with the cosmographers of the age, he believed the circumference of the earth much less than actual measurement has since shown it to be; striking out of the calculations, at once, nearly the whole breadth of the Pacific Ocean. That this conclusion was very natural, will be seen by glancing at the geographical facts that the learned then possessed, as data for their theories.

It was known that the continent of Asia was bounded on the east by a vast ocean, and that a similar body of water bounded Europe on the west, leaving the plausible inference, on the supposition that the earth was a sphere, that nothing but islands existed between these two great boundaries of land. Less than half of the real circumference of the globe is to be found between the western and eastern verges of the old continent, as they were then known; but it was too bold an effort of the mind, to conceive that startling fact, in the condition of human knowledge at the close of the fifteenth century. The theories were consequently content with drawing the limits of the east and the west into a much narrower circle, finding no data for any freer speculation; and believing it a sufficient act of boldness to maintain the spherical formation of the earth at all. It is true, that the latter theory was as old as Ptolemy, and quite probably much older; but even the antiquity of a system begins to be an argument against it, in the minds of the vulgar, when centuries elapse, and it receives no confirmation from actual experiment. Columbus supposed his island of Cipango, or Japan, to lie about a hundred and forty degrees of longitude east of its actual position; and, as a degree of longitude in the latitude of Japan, or 35° north, supposing the surface of the earth to be perfectly spherical, is about fifty-six statute miles, it follows that Columbus had advanced this island, on his chart, more than seven thousand English miles towards the eastward, or a distance materially exceeding two thousand marine leagues.

All this, however, was not only hidden in mystery as regards the common men of the expedition, but it far outstripped the boldest conceptions of the great navigator him-

self. Facts of this nature, notwithstanding, are far from detracting from the glory of the vast discoveries that were subsequently made, since they prove under what moral disadvantages the expedition was conceived, and under what a limited degree of knowledge it finally triumphed.

While Columbus was thus employed with the chart, it was a curious thing to witness the manner in which the seamen watched his smallest movement, studied the expression of his grave and composed countenance, and sought to read their fate in the contraction, or dilation, of his eyes. The gentlemen of the Santa Maria, and the pilots, stood at his elbow, and here and there some old mariner ventured to take his post at hand, where he could follow the slow progress of the pen, or note the explanation of a figure. Among these was Sancho, who was generally admitted to be one of the most expert seamen in the little fleet, in all things, at least, that did not require the knowledge of the schools. Columbus even turned to these men, and spoke them kindly, endeavouring to make them comprehend a part of their calling, which they saw practised daily, without ever succeeding in acquiring a practical acquaintance with it, pointing out particularly the distance come, and that which yet remained before them. Others, again, the less experienced, but not the less interested among the crew, hung about the rigging, whence they could overlook the scene, and fancy they beheld demonstrations that came of theories which it as much exceeded their reasoning powers to understand, as it exceeded their physical vision to behold the desired Indies themselves. As men become intellectual, they entertain abstractions, leaving the dominion of the senses to take refuge in that of thought. Until this change arrives, however, we are all singularly influenced by a parade of positive things. Words spoken, seldom produce the effect of words written; and the praise or censure that would enter lightly and unheeded into the ear, might even change our estimates of character, when received into the mind through the medium of the eye. Thus, the very seamen, who could not comprehend the reasoning of Columbus, fancied they understood his chart, and willingly enough believed that islands and continents must exist in the precise places where they saw them so plainly delineated.

After this exhibition, cheerfulness resumed its sway over the crew of the Santa Maria; and Sancho, who was generally considered as of the party of the admiral, was eagerly appealed to by his fellows, for many of the little circumstances that were thought to explain the features of the chart.

"Dost think, Sancho, that Cipango is as large as the admiral hath got the island on the chart?" asked one who had passed from the verge of despair to the other extreme; "that it lieth fairly, any eye may see, since its look is as natural as that of Ferro or Madeira."

"That hath he," answered Sancho, positively, "as one may see by its shape. Didst not notice the capes, and bays, and head-lands, all laid down as plainly as on any other well-known coast? Ah! these Genoese are skilful navigators; and Señor Colon, our noble admiral, hath not come all this distance without having some notion in what roadstead he is to anchor."

In such conclusive arguments, the dullest minds of the crew found exceeding consolation; whilst among all the common people of the ship, there was not one who did not feel more confidence in the happy termination of the voyage, since he had this seeming ocular proof of the existence of land in the part of the ocean they were in.

When the discourse between the admiral and Pinzon ceased, the latter made sail on the Pinta, which vessel had slowly passed the Santa Maria, and was now a hundred yards, or more, ahead of her; neither going through the water at a rate exceeding a knot an hour. At the moment just mentioned, or while the men were conversing of their newly awakened hopes, a shout drew all eyes towards their consort, where Pinzon was seen on the poop, waving his cap in exultation, and giving the usual proofs of extravagant delight.

"Land!—Land! Señor!" he shouted. "I claim my reward! Land! Land!"

"In what direction, good Martin Alonzo?" asked Columbus, so eagerly that his voice fairly trembled. "In which quarter dost thou perceive this welcome neighbour?"

"Here, to the south-west," pointing in that direction—

"a range of dim but noble mountains, and such as promise to satisfy the pious longings of the Holy Father himself!"

Every eye turned towards the south-west, and there, indeed, they fancied they beheld the long-sought proofs of their success. A faint, hazy mass, was visible in the horizon, broken in outline, more distinctly marked than clouds usually are, and yet so obscure as to require a practised eye to draw it out of the obscurity of the void. This is the manner in which land often appears to seamen, in peculiar conditions of the atmosphere; others, under such circumstances, being seldom able to distinguish it at all. Columbus was so practised in all the phenomena of the ocean, that the face of every man in the Santa Maria was turned towards his, in breathless expectation of the result, as soon as the first glance had been given towards the point of the compass mentioned. It was impossible to mistake the expression of the admiral's countenance, which immediately became radiant with delight and pious exultation. Uncovering himself, he cast a look upward in unbounded gratitude, and then fell on his knees, to return open thanks to God. This was the signal of triumph, and yet, in their desolate situation, exultation was not the prevalent feeling of the moment. Like Columbus, the men felt their absolute dependence on God; and a sense of humble and rebuked gratitude came over every spirit, as it might be simultaneously. Kneeling, the entire crews of the three vessels simultaneously commenced the chant of "Gloria in excelsis Deo!" lifting the voice of praise, for the first time since the foundations of the earth were laid, in that deep solitude of the ocean. Matins and vespers, it is true, were then habitually repeated in most Christian ships; but this sublime chant was now uttered to waves that had been praising their Maker, in their might and in their calm, for so many thousand years, for the first time in the voice of man.

"*Glory be to God on high!*" sang these rude mariners, with hearts softened by their escapes, dangers, and success, speaking as one man, though modulating their tones to the solemn harmony of a religious rite—"*and on earth peace, good will towards men. We praise thee, we bless thee, we worship thee, we glorify thee, we give thanks to thee for*

thy great glory! O Lord God! Heavenly King! God the Father Almighty!" &c. &c.

In this noble chant, which would seem to approach as near to the praises of angels as human powers can ever hope to rise, the voice of the admiral was distinct, and deep, but trembling with emotion.

When this act of pious gratitude was performed, the men ascended the rigging to make more certain of their success. All agreed in pronouncing the faintly delineated mass to be land, and the first sudden transport of unexpected joy was succeeded by the more regulated feelings of confirmed security. The sun set a little north of the dim mountains, and night closed around the scene, shadowing the ocean with as much of gloom as is ever to be found beneath a tropical and cloudless sky. As the first watch was set, Columbus, who, whenever the winds would allow, had persevered in steering what he fancied to be a due-west course, to satisfy the longings of his people, ordered the vessels to haul up to south-west by compass, which was in fact heading south-west by south, southerly. The wind increased, and, as the admiral had supposed the land to be distant about twenty-five leagues, when last seen, all in the little fleet confidently relied on obtaining a full and complete view of it in the morning. Columbus himself entertained this hope, though he varied his course reluctantly, feeling certain that the continent would be met by sailing west, or what he thought to be west, though he could have no similar confidence as to making any island.

Few slept soundly that night, visions of oriental riches, and of the wonders of the East, crowding on the minds of even the least imaginative, converting their slumbers into dreams rendered uneasy by longings for gold, and anticipations of the wonders of the unknown East. The men left their hammocks, from hour to hour, to stand in the rigging, watching for some new proofs of their proximity to the much-desired islands, and straining their eyes in vain, in the hope of looking deeper into the obscurity in quest of objects that fancy had already begun to invest with forms. In the course of the night, the vessels ran in a direct line towards the south-west, seventeen of the twenty-five leagues that Columbus had supposed alone separated

him from this new discovery; and just before the light dawned, every soul in the three vessels was stirring, in the eager hope of having the panorama of day open on such a sight, as they felt it to be but a slight grievance to have come so far, and to have risked so much, to behold.

"Yonder is a streak of light, glimmering in the east," cried Luis, in a cheerful voice; "and now, Señor Almirante, we may unite in terming you the honoured of the earth!"

"All rests with God, my young friend," returned Columbus; "whether land is near us or not, it boundeth the western ocean, and to that boundary we must proceed. Thou art right, truly, friend Gutierrez; the light is beginning to shed itself along the eastern margin of the sea, and even to rise in an arch into the vault above it."

"Would that the sun rose, for this one day, in the west, that we might catch the first glimpse of our new possessions in that radiant field of heaven, which his coming rays are so gloriously illuminating above the track we have just passed!"

"That will not happen, Master Pedro, since Sol hath journeyed daily round this planet of ours, from east to west, since time began, and will so continue to journey until time shall cease. This *is* a fact on which our senses may be trusted, though they mislead us in so many other things."

So reasoned Columbus, a man whose mind had outstripped the age, in his favourite study, and who was usually so calm and philosophical; simply because he reasoned in the fetters of habit and prejudice. The celebrated system of Ptolemy, that strange compound of truth and error, was the favourite astronomical law of the day. Copernicus, who was then but a mere youth, did not reduce the just conception of Pythagoras — just in outline, though fanciful in its connexion with both cause and effect — to the precision of science for many years after the discovery of America; and it is a strong proof of the dangers which attended the advancement of thought, that he was rewarded for this vast effort of human reason, by excommunication from the church, the

maledictions of which actually rested on his soul, if not on his body, until within a few years of the present moment! This single circumstance will show the reader how much our navigator had to overcome in achieving the great office he had assumed.

But all this time, the day is dawning, and the light is beginning to diffuse itself over the entire panorama of ocean and sky. As means were afforded, each look eagerly took in the whole range of the western horizon, and a chill of disappointment settled on every heart, as suspicion gradually became confirmation, that no land was visible. The vessels had passed, in the night, those bounds of the visible horizon, where masses of clouds had settled; and no one could any longer doubt that his senses had been deceived by some accidental peculiarity in the atmosphere. All eyes now turned again to the admiral, who, while he felt the disappointment in his inmost heart, maintained a dignified calm that it was not easy to disturb.

"These signs are not infrequent at sea, Señors," he said to those near him, speaking loud enough, nevertheless, to be heard by most of the crew, "though seldom as treacherous as they have now proved to be. All accustomed to the ocean have doubtless seen them often; and as physical facts, they must be taken as counting neither for nor against us. As omens, each person will consider them as he putteth his trust in God, whose grace and mercy to us all, is yet, by a million of times, unrequited, and still would be, were we to sing *Gloria in excelsis*, from morn till night, as long as breath lasted for the sacred office."

"Still, our hope was so very strong, Don Christopher," observed one of the gentlemen, "that we find the disappointment hard to be borne. You speak of omens, Señor; are there any physical signs of our being near the land of Cathay?"

"Omens come of God, if they come at all. They are a species of miracles preceding natural events, as real miracles surpass them. I think this expedition cometh of God; and I see no irreverence in supposing that this late appearance of land may have been heaped along the horizon for an encouraging sign to persevere, and as a proof

that our labours will be rewarded in the end. I cannot say, nevertheless, that any but natural means were used, for these deceptions are familiar to us mariners."

"I shall endeavour so to consider it, Señor Almirante," gravely returned the other, and the conversation dropped.

The non-appearance of the land, which had been so confidently hoped for, produced a deep gloom in the vessels, notwithstanding; again changing the joy of their people into despondency. Columbus continued to steer due-west, by compass, or west by south, southerly, in reality, until meridian, when, yielding to the burning wishes of those around him, he again altered his course to the south-west. This course was followed until the ships had gone far enough in that direction to leave no doubt that the people had been misled by clouds, the preceding evening. At night, when not the faintest hope remained, the vessels kept away due west again, running, in the course of the twenty-four hours, quite thirty-one leagues, which were recorded before the crew as twenty-four.

For several succeeding days no material changes occurred. The wind continued favourable, though frequently so light as to urge the vessels very slowly ahead, reducing the day's progress sometimes to little more than fifty of our English miles. The sea was calm, and weeds were again met, though in much smaller quantities than before. September 29th, or the fourth day after Pinzon had called out "land," another frigate-bird was seen; and as it was the prevalent notion among seamen that this bird never flew far from the shore, some faint hopes were momentarily revived by his passage. Two pelicans also appeared, and the air was so soft and balmy that Columbus declared nothing but nightingales were wanting to render the nights as delicious as those of Andalusia.

In this manner did birds come and go, exciting hopes that were doomed to be disappointed; sometimes flying in numbers that would seem to forbid the idea that they could be straying on the waste of waters, without the certainty of their position. Again, too, the attention of the admiral, and of the people, was drawn to the variation of the needle, all uniting in the opinion that the phenomenon was

only to be explained by the movements of the star. At length the first day of October arrived, and the pilots of the admiral's vessel seriously set to work to ascertain the distance they had come. They had been misled as well as the rest, by the management of Columbus, and they now approached the latter, as he stood at his usual post on the poop, in order to give the result of their calculations, with countenances that were faithful indexes of the concern they felt.

"We are not less than five hundred and seventy-eight leagues west of Ferro, Señor Almirante," commenced one of the two; "a fearful distance to venture into the bosom of an unknown ocean!"

"Thou say'st true, honest Bartolemeo," returned Columbus, calmly; "though the farther we venture, the greater will be the honour. Thy reckoning is even short of the truth, since this of mine, which is no secret from our people, giveth even five hundred and eighty-four leagues, fully six more than thine. But, after all, this scarce equalleth a voyage from Lisbon to Guinea, and we are not men to be outdone by the seamen of Don John!"

"Ah! Señor Almirante, the Portuguese have their islands by the way, and the old world at their elbows; while we, should this earth prove not to be really a sphere, are hourly sailing towards its verge, and are running into untried dangers!"

"Go to, Bartolemeo! thou talkest like a river-man who hath been blown outside his bar by a strong breeze from the land, and who fancieth his risks greater than man ever yet endured, because the water that wetteth his tongue is salt. Let the men see this reckoning, fearlessly; and strive to be of cheer, lest we remember thy misgivings, beneath the groves of Cathay."

"The man is sore beset with dread," coolly observed Luis, as the pilots descended from the poop with a lingering step and a heavy heart. "Even your six short leagues added to the weight on his spirit. Five hundred and seventy-eight were frightful, but five hundred and eighty-four became burthensome to his soul!"

"What would he then have thought had he known the truth, of which, young count, even thou art ignorant?"

"I hope you do not distrust my nerves, Don Christopher, that this matter is kept a secret from me?"

"I ought not, I do believe, Señor de Llera; and yet one gets to be distrustful even of himself, when weighty concerns hang by a thread. Hast thou any real idea of the length of the road we have come?"

"Not I, by St. Iago! Señor. It is enough for me that we are far from the Doña Mercedes, and a league more or less counts but little. Should your theory be true, and the earth prove to be round, I have the consolation of knowing that we shall get back to Spain, in time, even by chasing the sun."

"Still thou hast some general notion of our true distance from Ferro, knowing that each day it is lessened before the people."

"To tell you the truth, Don Christopher, arithmetic and I have little feeling for each other. For the life of me, I never could tell the exact amount of my own revenues, in figures, though it might not be so difficult to come at their results, in another sense. If truth were said, however, I should think your five hundred and eighty leagues might fairly be set down at some six hundred and ten or twenty."

"Add yet another hundred and thou wilt not be far from the fact. We are, at this moment, seven hundred and seven leagues from Ferro, and fast drawing near to the meridian of Cipango. In another glorious week, or ten days at most, I shall begin seriously to expect to see the continent of Asia!"

"This is travelling faster than I had thought, Señor," answered Luis, carelessly; "but journey on; one of your followers will not complain, though we circle earth itself."

CHAPTER V.

"Pronounce what sea, what shore is this?'
The gulf, the rock of Salamis?"
BYRON.

THE adventurers had now been twenty-three days out of sight of land, all of which time, with the exception of a few very immaterial changes in the wind, and a day or two of calms, they had been steadily advancing towards the west, with a southern variation that ranged between a fourth of a point and a point and a quarter, though the latter fact was unknown to them. Their hopes had been so often raised to be disappointed, that a sort of settled gloom now began to prevail among the common men, which was only relieved by irregular and uncertain cries of 'land,' as the clouds produced their usual deceptions in the horizon. Still their feelings were in that feverish state which admits of any sudden change; and as the sea continued smooth as a river, the air balmy, and the skies most genial, they were prevented from falling into despair. Sancho reasoned, as usual, among his fellows, resisting ignorance and folly, with impudence and dogmatism; while Luis unconsciously produced an effect on the spirits of his associates by his cheerfulness and confidence. Columbus, himself, remained calm, dignified, and reserved, relying on the justice of his theories, and continuing resolute to attain his object. The wind remained fair, as before, and in the course of the night and day of the 2d of October, the vessels sailed more than a hundred miles still further into that unknown and mysterious sea. The weeds now drifted westerly, which was a material change, the currents previously setting, in the main, in an opposite direction. The 3d proved even a still more favourable day, the distance made reaching to forty-seven leagues. The admiral now began to think seriously that he had passed the islands laid down in his chart, and, with the high resolution of one sustained by

grand conceptions, he decided to stand on west, with the intention of reaching the shores of the Indies, at once. The 4th was a better day than either, the little fleet passing steadily ahead, without deviating from its course, until it had fairly made one hundred and eighty-nine miles, much the greatest day's work it had yet achieved. This distance, so formidable to men who began to count each hour and each league with uneasiness, was reckoned to all on board, but Luis, as only one hundred and thirty-eight miles.

Friday, October 5th, commenced even more favourably, Columbus finding his ship gliding through the water—there being no sea to cause her to reel and stagger—at the rate of about eight miles the hour, which was almost as fast as she had ever been known to go, and which would have caused this day's work to exceed the last, had not the wind failed in the night. As it was, however, fifty-seven more leagues were placed between Ferro and the position of the vessels; a distance that was reduced to forty-five, with the crew. The following day brought no material change, Providence appearing to urge them on at a speed that must soon solve the great problem which the admiral had been so long discussing with the learned. It was already dark, when the Pinta came sheering down upon the quarter of the Santa Maria, until she had got so near that her commander hailed without the aid of a trumpet.

"Is Señor Don Christopher at his post, as usual?" hurriedly demanded Pinzon, speaking like one who felt he had matter of weight upon his mind: "I see persons on the poop, but know not if his Excellency be among them."

"What would'st thou, good Martin Alonzo?" answered the admiral: "I am here, watching for the shores of Cipango, or Cathay, whichever God, in his goodness, may be pleased first to give us."

"I see so many reasons, noble admiral, for changing our course more to the south, that I could not resist the desire to come down and say as much. Most of the late discoveries have been made in the southern latitudes, and we might do well to get more southing."

"Have we gained aught by changing our course in this direction? Thy heart seemeth bent on more southern climes, worthy friend; while to my feelings we are now in

the very paradise of sweets, land only excepted. Islands *may* lie south, or even north of us; but a continent *must* lie west. Why abandon a certainty for an uncertainty? the greater for the less? Cipango or Cathay, for some pleasant spot, fragrant with spices no doubt, but without a name, and which can never equal the glories of Asia, either as a discovery or as a conquest?"

"I would, Señor, I might prevail on you to steer more to the south!"

"Go to, Martin Alonzo, and forget thy cravings. My heart is in the west, and thither reason teacheth me to follow it. First hear my orders, and then go seek the Niña, that thy brother, the worthy Vicente Yañez, may obey them also. Should aught separate us in the night, it shall be the duty of all to stand manfully towards the west, striving to find our company; for it would be a sad, as well as a useless thing, to be wandering alone in this unknown ocean."

Pinzon, though evidently much displeased, was fain to obey, and, after a short but a sharp and loud altercation with the admiral, the commander of the Pinta caused her to sheer towards the felucca to execute the order.

"Martin Alonzo beginneth to waver," Columbus observed to Luis. "He is a bold and exceeding skilful mariner, but steadiness of object is not his greatest quality. He must be restrained from following the impulses of his weakness, by the higher hand of authority. Cathay! — Cathay is my aim!"

After midnight the wind increased, and for two hours the caravels glanced through the smooth ocean at their greatest speed, which equalled nine English miles the hour. Few now undressed, except to change their clothes; and Columbus slumbered on the poop that night, using an old sail for his couch. Luis was his companion, and both were up and on the deck with the first appearance of dawn. A common feeling seemed to exist among all, that land was near, and that a great discovery was about to be made. An annuity of ten thousand maravedis had been promised by the sovereigns to him who should first descry land, and every eye was on the gaze, whenever opportunity permitted, to gain the prize.

As the light diffused itself downward towards the margin

of the ocean, in the western horizon, all thought there was the appearance of land, and sail was eagerly crowded on the different vessels, in order to press forward as fast as possible, that their respective crews might enjoy the earliest and the best chances of obtaining the first view. In this respect, circumstances singularly balanced the advantages and disadvantages between the competitors. The Niña was the fastest vessel in light airs and smooth water, but she was also the smallest. The Pinta came next in general speed, holding a middle place in size, and beating her consorts with a fresh breeze; while the Santa Maria, the last in point of sailing, had the highest masts, and consequently swept the widest range of horizon.

"There is a good feeling uppermost to-day, Señor Don Christopher," said Luis, as he stood at the admiral's side, watching the advance of the light; "and if eyes can do it, we may hope for the discovery of land. The late run hath awakened all our hopes, and land we must have, even if we raise it from the bottom of the ocean."

"Yonder is Pepe, the dutiful husband of Monica, perched on our highest yard, straining his eyes towards the west, in the hope of gaining the reward!" said Columbus, smiling. "Ten thousand maravedis, yearly, would, in sooth, be some atonement to carry back to the grieved mother and the deserted boy!"

"Martin Alonzo is in earnest, also, Señor. See how he presseth forward in the Pinta; but Vicente Yañez hath the heels of him, and is determined to make his salutations first to the Great Khan, neglectful of the elder brother's rights.

"Señor! — Señores!" shouted Sancho from the spar on which he was seated as composedly as a modern lady would recline on her ottoman — "the felucca is speaking in signals."

"This is true" — cried Columbus — "Vicente Yañez showeth the colours of the queen, and there goeth a lombarda to announce some great event!"

As these were the signals directed in the event that either vessel should discover land before her consorts, little doubt was entertained that the leading caravel had, at last, really announced the final success of the expedition. Still, the

recent and grave disappointment was remembered, and though all devoutly poured out their gratitude in mental offerings, their lips were sealed until the result should show the truth. Every rag of canvass was set, however, and the vessels seemed to hasten their speed towards the west, like birds tired with an unusual flight, which make new efforts with their wearied wings as the prospect of alighting suddenly breaks on their keen vision and active instincts.

Hour passed after hour, however, and brought no confirmation of the blessed tidings. The western horizon looked heavy and clouded throughout the morning, it is true, often deceiving even the most practised eyes; but as the day advanced, and the vessels had passed more than fifty miles further towards the west, it became impossible not to ascribe the hopes of the morning to another optical illusion. The depression of spirits that succeeded this new disappointment was greater than any that had before existed, and the murmurs that arose were neither equivocal nor suppressed. It was urged that some malign influence was leading the adventurers on, finally to abandon them to despair and destruction, in a wilderness of waters. This is the moment when, it has been said, Columbus was compelled to make conditions with his followers, stipulating to abandon the enterprise altogether, should it fail of success in a given number of days. But this weakness has been falsely ascribed to the great navigator, who never lost the fullest exercise of his authority, even in the darkest moments of doubt; maintaining his purpose, and asserting his power, with the same steadiness and calmness, in what some thought this distant verge of the earth, as he had done in the rivers of Spain. Prudence and policy at last dictated a change of course, however, which he was neither too obstinate nor too proud to submit to, and he accordingly adopted it of his own accord.

"We are now quite a thousand leagues from Ferro, by my private reckoning, friend Luis," said Columbus to his young companion, in one of their private conferences, which took place after nightfall, "and it is really time to expect the continent of Asia. Hitherto I have looked for nought but islands, and not with much expectation of seeing even them, though Martin Alonzo and the pilots have been

so sanguine in their hopes. The large flocks of birds, however, that have appeared to-day, would seem to invite us to follow their flights,—land, out of doubt, being their aim. I shall accordingly change our course more to the south, though not as far as Pinzon desireth, Cathay being still my goal."

Columbus gave the necessary orders, and the two other caravels were brought within hail of the Santa Maria, when their commanders were directed to steer west-south-west. The reason for this change was the fact that so many birds had been seen flying in that direction. The intention of the admiral was to pursue this course for two days. Notwithstanding this alteration, no land was visible in the morning; but, as the wind was light, and the vessels had only made five leagues since the course was changed, the disappointment produced less despondency than usual. In spite of their uncertainty, all in the vessels now rioted in the balmy softness of the atmosphere, which was found so fragrant that it was delicious to breathe it. The weeds, too, became more plenty, and many of them were as fresh as if torn from their native rocks only a day or two previously. Birds, that unequivocally belonged to the land, were also seen, in considerable numbers, one of which was actually taken; whilst ducks abounded, and another pelican was met. Thus passed the 8th of October, the adventurers filled with hope, though the vessels only increased their distance from Europe some forty miles in the course of the twenty-four hours. The succeeding day brought no other material change than a shift of wind, which compelled the admiral to alter his course to west by north, for a few hours. This caused him some uneasiness, for it was his wish to proceed due west, or west-southerly; though it afforded considerable relief to many among his people, who had been terrified by the prevalence of the winds in one direction. Had the variation still existed, this would have been, in fact, steering the very course the admiral desired to go; but by this time the vessels were in a latitude and longitude where the needle resumed its powers and became faithful to its direction. In the course of the night, the trades also resumed their influence; and early on the morning of the 10th the vessels again headed towards the west-

south-west, by compass, which was, in truth, the real course, or as near to it as might be.

Such was the state of things when the sun rose on the morning of the 10th October, 1492. The wind had freshened, and all three of the vessels were running free the whole day, at a rate varying from five knots to nine. The signs of the proximity of land had been so very numerous of late, that, at every league of ocean they passed over, the adventurers had the strongest expectations of discovering it, and nearly every eye in all three of the ships was kept constantly bent on the western horizon, in the hope of its owner's being the first to make the joyful announcement of its appearance. The cry of "land" had been so frequent of late, however, that Columbus caused it to be made known that he who again uttered it causelessly, should lose the reward promised by the sovereigns, even should he happen to be successful in the end. This information induced more caution, and not a tongue betrayed its master's eagerness on this all-engrossing subject, throughout the anxious and exciting days of the 8th, 9th, and 10th October. But, their progress in the course of the 10th, exceeding that made in the course of both the other days, the evening sky was watched with a vigilance even surpassing that which had attended any previous sunset. This was the moment most favourable for examining the western horizon, the receding light illuminating the whole watery expanse in that direction, in a way to give up all its secrets to the eye.

"Is that a hummock of land?" asked Pepe of Sancho, in a low voice, as they lay together on a yard, watching the upper limb of the sun, as it settled, like a glimmering star, beneath the margin of the ocean—"or is it some of this misguiding vapour that hath so often misled us of late?"

"'T is neither, Pepe," returned the more cool and experienced Sancho; "but a rise of the [illegible] which is ever thus tossing itself upward on the margi[illegible] the ocean. Didst ever see a calm so profound, that the water left a straight circle on the horizon? No — no — there is no land to be seen in the west to-night; the ocean, in that quarter, looking as blank as if we stood on the western shore of Ferro,

and gazed outward, into the broad fields of the Atlantic. Our noble admiral may have truth of his side, Pepe; but as yet he hath no other evidence of it than is to be found in his reasons."

"And dost thou, too, take sides against him, Sancho, and say that he is a madman who is willing to lead others to destruction, as well as himself, so that he die an admiral in fact, and a viceroy in fancy?"

"I take sides against no man whose doblas take sides with me, Pepe; for that would be quarrelling with the best friend that both the rich and poor can make, which is gold. Don Christopher is doubtless very learned, and one thing hath he settled to my satisfaction, even though neither he nor any of us ever see a single jewel of Cathay, or pluck a hair from the beard of the Great Khan, and that is, that this world is round; had it been a plain, all this water would not be placed at the outer side, since it would clearly run off, unless dammed up by land. Thou canst conceive that, Pepe?"

"That do I; it is reasonable and according to every man's experience. Monica thinketh the Genoese a saint!"

"Harkee, Pepe; thy Monica is no doubt an uncommonly sensible woman, else would she never have taken thee for a husband, when she might have chosen among a dozen of thy fellows. I once thought of the girl myself, and might have told her so, had she seen fit to call me a saint, too, which she did not, seeing that she used a very different epithet. But, admitting the Señor Colon to be a saint, he would be none the better admiral for it, inasmuch as I never yet met with a saint, or even with a virgin, that could understand the bearings and distances of a run as short as that from Cadiz to Barcelona."

"Thou speakest irreverently, Sancho, of virgins and saints, seeing that they know every thing"—

"Ay, every thing but that. Our Lady of Rabida does not know south-east-and-by-southe-half-southe, from north-west-and-by-noathe-half-noathe. I have tried her, in this matter, and I tell thee she is as ignorant of it as thy Monica is ignorant of the manner in which the Duchess of Medina Sidonia saluteth the noble duke her husband, when he returneth from hawking."

"I dare say the duchess would not know, either, what to say, were she in Monica's place, and were she called on to receive me, as Monica will be, when we return from this great expedition. If I have never hawked, neither hath the duke ever sailed for two-and-thirty days, in a west course from Ferro, and this, too, without once seeing land!"

"Thou say'st true, Pepe; nor hast thou ever yet done this and returned to Palos. But what meaneth all this movement on deck? Our people seem to be much moved by some feeling, while I can swear it is not from having discovered Cathay, or from having seen the Great Khan, shining like a carbuncle, on his throne of diamonds."

"It is rather that they do not see him thus, that the men are moved. Dost not hear angry and threatening words from the mouths of the troublesome ones?"

"By San Iago! were I Don Christopher, but I would deduct a dobla from the wages of each of the rascals, and give the gold to such peaceable men as you and me, Pepe, who are willing to starve to death, ere we will go back without a sight of Asia."

"'T is something of this sort, of a truth, Sancho. Let us descend, that his Excellency may see that he hath some friends among the crew."

As Sancho assented to this proposition, he and Pepe stood on the deck in the next minute. Here, indeed, the people were found in a more mutinous state than they had been since the fleet left Spain. The long continuation of fair winds, and pleasant weather, had given them so much reason to expect a speedy termination of their voyage, that nearly the whole crew were now of opinion it was due to themselves to insist on the abandonment of an expedition that seemed destined to lead to nothing but destruction. The discussion was loud and angry, even one or two of the pilots inclining to think, with their inferiors, that further perseverance would certainly be useless, and might be fatal. When Sancho and Pepe joined the crowd, it had just been determined to go in a body to Columbus, and to demand, in terms that could not be misconceived, the immediate return of the ships to Spain. In order that this might be done with method, Pedro Alonzo Niño, one of the pilots, and an aged seaman called Juan Martin, were selected as spokes-

men. At this critical moment, too, the admiral and Luis were seen descending from the poop, with an intent to retire to their cabin, when a rush was made aft, by all on deck, and twenty voices were heard simultaneously crying—

"Señor — Don Christopher — Your Excellency — Señor Almirante!"

Columbus stopped, and faced the people with a calmness and dignity that caused the heart of Niño to leap towards his mouth, and which materially checked the ardour of most of his followers.

"What would ye?" demanded the admiral, sternly. "Speak! Ye address a friend."

"We come to ask our precious lives, Señor," answered Juan Martin, who thought his insignificance might prove a shield—"nay, what is more, the means of putting bread into the mouths of our wives and children. All here are weary of this profitless voyage, and most think if it last any longer than shall be necessary to return, it will be the means of our perishing of want."

"Know ye the distance that lieth between us and Ferro, that ye come to me with this blind and foolish request? Speak, Niño; I see that thou art also of their number, notwithstanding thy hesitation."

"Señor," returned the pilot, "we are all of a mind. To go farther into this blank and unknown ocean, is tempting God to destroy us, for our wilfulness. It is vain to suppose that this broad belt of water hath been placed by Providence around the habitable earth for any other purpose than to rebuke those who audaciously seek to be admitted to mysteries beyond their understanding. Do not all the churchmen, Señor—the pious prior of Santa Maria de Rabida, your own particular friend, included — tell us constantly of the necessity of submitting to a knowledge we can never equal, and to believe without striving to lift a veil that covers incomprehensible things?"

"I might retort on thee, honest Niño, with thine own words," answered Columbus, "and bid thee confide in those whose knowledge thou canst never equal, and to follow submissively where thou art totally unfitted to lead.

Go to; withdraw with thy fellows, and let me hear no more of this."

"Nay, Señor," cried two or three in a breath, "we cannot perish without making our complaints heard. We have followed too far already, and, even now, may have gone beyond the means of a safe return. Let us then turn the heads of the caravels towards Spain, this night, lest we never live to see that blessed country again."

"This toucheth on revolt! Who among ye dare use language so bold, to your admiral?"

"All of us, Señor," answered twenty voices together. "Men need be bold, when their lives would be forfeited by silence."

"Sancho, art thou, too, of the party of these mutineers? Dost thou confess thy heart to be Spain-sick, and thy unmanly fears to be stronger than thy hopes of imperishable glory and thy longings for the riches and pleasures of Cathay?"

"If I do, Señor Don Almirante, set me to greasing masts, and take me from the helm, for ever, as one unfit to watch the whirlings of the north star. Sail with the caravels, into the hall of the Great Khan, and make fast to his throne, and you will find Sancho at his post, whether it be at the helm or at the lead. He was born in a shipyard, and hath a natural desire to know what a ship can do."

"And thou, Pepe? Hast thou so forgotten thy duty as to come with this language to thy commander? to the admiral and viceroy of thy sovereign, the Doña Isabella?"

"Viceroy over what?" exclaimed a voice from the crowd, without permitting Pepe to answer. "A viceroy over sea-weed, and one that hath tunny-fish, and whales, and pelicans, for subjects! We tell you, Señor Colon, that this is no treatment for Castilians, who require more substantial discoveries than fields of weeds, and islands of clouds!"

"Home! — Home!—Spain!—Spain!—Palos!—Palos!" cried nearly all together, Sancho and Pepe having quitted the throng and ranged themselves at the side of Columbus. "We will no further west, which is tempting God; but de-

mand to be carried back whence we came, if, indeed, it be not already too late for so happy a deliverance."

"To whom speak ye in this shameless manner, graceless knaves?" exclaimed Luis, unconsciously laying a hand where it had been his practice to carry a rapier. "Get ye gone, or"—

"Be tranquil, friend Pedro, and leave this matter with me," interrupted the admiral, whose composure had scarce been deranged by the violent conduct of his subordinates. "Listen to what I have to say, ye rude and rebellious men, and let it be received as my final answer to any and all such demands as ye have just dared to make. This expedition hath been sent forth by the two sovereigns, your royal master and mistress, with the express design of crossing the entire breadth of the vast Atlantic, until it might reach the shores of India. Now, let what will happen, these high expectations shall not be disappointed; but westward we sail, until stopped by the land. For this determination, my life shall answer. Look to it, that none of yours be endangered by resistance to the royal orders, or by disrespect and disobedience to their appointed substitute; for, another murmur, and I mark the man that uttereth it, for signal punishment. In this ye have my full determination, and beware of encountering the anger of those whose displeasure may prove more fatal than these fancied dangers of the ocean.

"Look at what ye have before ye, in the way of fear, and then at what ye have before ye, in the way of hope. In the first case, ye have every thing to dread from the sovereigns' anger, should ye proceed to a violent resistance of their authority, or, what is as bad, something like a certainty of your being unable to reach Spain, for want of food and water, should ye revolt against your lawful leaders and endeavour to return. For this, it is now too late. The voyage east must, as regards time, be double that we have just made, and the caravels are beginning to be lightened in their casks. Land, and land in this region, hath become necessary to us. Now look at the other side of the picture. Before ye, lieth Cathay, with all its riches, its novelties and its glories! A region more wonderful than any that hath yet been inhabited by man, and occupied by

a race as gentle as they are hospitable and just. To this must be added the approbation of the sovereigns, and the credit that will belong to even the meanest mariner that hath manfully stood by his commander in achieving so great an end."

"If we will obey three days longer, Señor, will you then turn towards Spain, should no land be seen?" cried a voice from the crowd.

"Never"—returned Columbus, firmly. "To India am I bound, and for India will I steer, though another month be needed to complete the journey. Go then to your posts or your hammocks, and let me hear no more of this."

There was so much natural dignity in the manner of Columbus, and when he spoke in anger, his voice carried so much of rebuke with it, that it exceeded the daring of ordinary men to presume to answer when he commanded silence. The people sullenly dispersed, therefore, though the disaffection was by no means appeased. Had there been only a single vessel in the expedition, it is quite probable that they would have proceeded to some act of violence; but, uncertain of the state of feeling in the Pinta and the Niña, and holding Martin Alonzo Pinzon in as much habitual respect as they stood in awe of Columbus, the boldest among them were, for the present, fain to give vent to their dissatisfaction in murmurs, though they secretly meditated decided measures, as soon as an opportunity for consultation and concert, with the crews of the other vessels, might offer.

"This looketh serious, Señor," said Luis, as soon as he and the admiral were alone again in their little cabin, "and, by St. Luke! it might cool the ardour of these knaves, did your Excellency suffer me to cast two or three of the most insolent of the vagabonds into the sea."

"Which is a favour that some among them have actually contemplated conferring upon thee and me," answered Columbus. "Sancho keepeth me well informed of the feeling among the people, and it is now many days since he hath let me know this fact. We will proceed peaceably, if possible, Señor Gutierrez, or de Muños, whichever name thou most affectest, as long as we can; but should there truly arise an occasion to resort to force, thou wilt find that

Christofero Colombo knoweth how to wield a sword as well as he knoweth how to use his instruments of science."

"How far do you really think us from land, Señor Almirante? I ask from curiosity and not from dread; for though the ship floated on the very verge of the earth, ready to fall off into vacuum, you should hear no murmur from me."

"I am well assured of this, young noble," returned Columbus, affectionately squeezing the hand of Luis, "else would'st thou not be here. I make our distance from Ferro exceed a thousand marine leagues: this is about the same as that at which I have supposed Cathay to lie from Europe, and it is, out of question, sufficiently far to meet with many of the islands that are known to abound in the seas of Asia. The public reckoning maketh the distance a little more than eight hundred leagues; but, in consequence of the favourable currents of which we have lately had so much, I doubt if we are not fully eleven hundred from the Canaries, at this moment, if not even farther. We are doubtless a trifle nearer to the Azores, which are situated farther west, though in a higher latitude."

"Then you think, Señor, that we may really expect land, ere many days?"

"So certain do I feel of this, Luis, that I should have little apprehension of complying with the terms of these audacious men, but for the humiliation. Ptolemy divided the earth into twenty-four hours, of fifteen degrees each, and I place but some five or six of these hours in the Atlantic. Thirteen hundred leagues, I feel persuaded, will bring us to the shores of Asia, and eleven of these thirteen hundred leagues do I believe we have come."

"To-morrow may then prove an eventful day, Señor Almirante; and now to our cots, where I shall dream of a fairer land than Christian eye ever yet looked upon, with the fairest maiden of Spain—nay, by San Pedro! of Europe—beckoning me on!"

Columbus and Luis now sought their rest. In the morning, it was evident by the surly looks of the people, that feelings like a suppressed volcano were burning in their bosoms, and that any untoward accident might produce an eruption. Fortunately, however, signs, of a nature so

novel, soon appeared, as to draw off the attention of the most disaffected from their melancholy broodings. The wind was fresh, as usual fair, and, what was really a novelty since quitting Ferro, the sea had got up, and the vessels were riding over waves which removed that appearance of an unnatural calm that had hitherto alarmed the men with its long continuance. Columbus had not been on deck five minutes, when a joyful cry from Pepe drew all eyes towards the yard on which he was at work. The seaman was pointing eagerly at some object in the water, and rushing to the side of the vessel, all saw the welcome sign that had caught his gaze. As the ship lifted on a sea, and shot ahead, a rush, of a bright fresh green, was passed, and the men gave a loud shout, for all well knew that this plant certainly came from some shore, and that it could not have been long torn from the spot of its growth.

"This is truly a blessed omen!" said Columbus: "rushes cannot grow without the light of heaven, whatever may be the case with weeds."

This little occurrence changed, or at least checked, the feelings of the disaffected. Hope once more resumed its sway, and all who could, ascended the rigging to watch the western horizon. The rapid motion of the vessels, too, added to this buoyancy of feeling, the Pinta and Niña passing and repassing the admiral, as it might be in pure wantonness. A few hours later, fresh weeds were met, and about noon Sancho announced confidently that he had seen a fish which is known to live in the vicinity of rocks. An hour later, the Niña came sheering up towards the admiral, with her commander in the rigging, evidently desirous of communicating some tidings of moment.

"What now, good Vicente Yañez?" called out Columbus: "thou seemest the messenger of welcome news!"

"I think myself such, Don Christopher," answered the other. "We have just passed a bush bearing roseberries, quite newly torn from the tree! This is a sign that cannot deceive us."

"Thou say'st true, my friend. To the west! — to the west! Happy will he be whose eyes first behold the wonders of the Indies!"

It would not be easy to describe the degree of hope and

exultation that now began to show itself among the people. Good-natured jests flew about the decks, and the laugh was easily raised where so lately all had been despondency and gloom. The minutes flew swiftly by, and every man had ceased to think of Spain, bending his thoughts again on the as yet unseen west.

A little later, a cry of exultation was heard from the Pinta, which was a short distance to windward and ahead of the admiral. As this vessel shortened sail and hove-to, lowering a boat, and then immediately kept away, the Santa Maria soon came foaming up under her quarter, and spoke her.

"What now, Martin Alonzo?" asked Columbus, suppressing his anxiety in an appearance of calmness and dignity. "Thou and thy people seem in an ecstasy!"

"Well may we be so! About an hour since, we passed a piece of the cane-plant, of the sort of which sugar is made in the East, as travellers say, and such as we often see in our own ports. But this is a trifling symptom of land compared to the trunk of a tree that we have also passed. As if Providence had not yet dealt with us with sufficient kindness, all these articles were met floating near each other; and we have thought them of sufficient value to lower a boat, that we might possess them."

"Lay thy sails to the mast, good Martin Alonzo, and send thy prizes hither, that I may judge of their value."

Pinzon complied, and the Santa Maria being hove-to, at the same time, the boat soon touched her side. Martin Alonzo made but one bound from the thwart to the gunwale of the ship, and was soon on the deck of the admiral. Here he eagerly displayed the different articles that his men tossed after him, all of which had been taken out of the sea, not an hour before.

"See, noble Señores," said Martin Alonzo, almost breathless with haste to display his treasures—"this is a sort of board, though of unknown wood, and fashioned with exceeding care: here is also another piece of cane: this is a plant that surely cometh from the land; and most of all, this is a walking-stick, fashioned by the hand of man, and that, too, with exceeding care!"

"All this is true," said Columbus, examining the different

articles, one by one; "God, in his might and power, be praised for these comfortable evidences of our near approach to a new world! None but a malignant infidel can now doubt of our final success."

"These things have questionless come from some boat that hath been upset, which will account for their being so near each other in the water," said Martin Alonzo, willing to sustain his physical proofs by a plausible theory. "It would not be wonderful were drowned bodies near."

"Let us hope not, Martin Alonzo," answered the admiral; "let us fancy nought so melancholy. A thousand accidents may have thrown these articles together, into the sea; and once there, they would float in company for a twelvemonth, unless violently separated. But, come they whence they may, to us, they are infallible proofs that not only land is near, but land which is the abiding place of men."

It is not easy to describe the enthusiasm that now prevailed in all the vessels. Hitherto they had met with only birds, and fishes, and weeds, signs that are often precarious; but here was such proof of their being in the neighbourhood of their fellow-creatures, as it was not easy to withstand. It was true, articles of this nature might drift, in time, even across the vast distance they had come; but it was not probable that they would drift so far in company. Then, the berries were fresh, the board was of an unknown wood, and the walking-stick, in particular, if such indeed was its use, was carved in a manner that was never practised in Europe. The different articles passed from hand to hand, until all in the ship had examined them; and every thing like doubt vanished before this unlooked-for confirmation of the admiral's predictions. Pinzon returned to his vessel, sail was again made, and the fleet continued to steer to the west-south-west, until the hour of sunset.

Something like a chill of disappointment again came over the more faint-hearted of the people, however, as they once more, or for the thirty-fourth time since quitting Gomera, saw the sun sink behind a watery horizon. More than a hundred vigilant eyes watched the glowing margin of the ocean, at this interesting moment, and though the

heavens were cloudless, nought was visible but the gloriously tinted vault, and the outline of water, broken into the usual ragged forms of the unquiet element.

The wind freshened as evening closed, and Columbus having called his vessels together, as was usual with him at that hour, he issued new orders concerning the course. For the last two or three days they had been steering materially to the southward of west, and Columbus, who felt persuaded that his most certain and his nearest direction, from land to land, was to traverse the ocean, if possible, on a single parallel of latitude, was anxious to resume his favourite course, which was what he fancied to be due west. Just as night drew around the mariners, accordingly, the ships edged away to the required course, and ran off at the rate of nine miles the hour, following the orb of day, as if resolute to penetrate into the mysteries of his nightly retreat, until some great discovery should reward the effort.

Immediately after this change in the course, the people sang the vesper hymn, as usual, which, in that mild sea, they often deferred until the hour when the watch below sought their hammocks. That night, however, none felt disposed to sleep; and it was late when the chant of the seamen commenced, with the words of "*Salve fac Regina.*" It was a solemn thing to hear the songs of religious praise, mingling with the sighings of the breeze and the wash of the waters, in that ocean solitude; and the solemnity was increased by the expectations of the adventurers and the mysteries that lay behind the curtain they believed themselves about to raise. Never before had this hymn sounded so sweetly in the ears of Columbus, and Luis found his eyes suffusing with tears as he recalled the soft thrilling notes of Mercedes's voice, in her holy breathings of praise at this hour. When the office ended, the admiral called the crew to the quarter-deck, and addressed them earnestly from his station on the poop.

"I rejoice, my friends," he said, "that you have had the grace to chant the vesper hymn in so devout a spirit, at a moment when there is so much reason to be grateful to God for his goodness to us throughout this voyage. Look back at the past, and see if one of you, the oldest sailor of your number, can recal any passage at sea, I will not

say of equal length, for that no one here hath ever before made, but any equal number of days at sea, in which the winds have been as fair, the weather as propitious, or the ocean as calm, as on this occasion. Then what cheering signs have encouraged us to persevere! God is in the midst of the ocean, my friends, as well as in his sanctuaries of the land. Step by step, as it were, hath he led us on, now filling the air with birds, now causing the sea to abound with unusual fishes, and then spreading before us fields of plants, such as are seldom met far from the rocks where they grew. The last and best of his signs hath he given us this day. My own calculations are in unison with these proofs, and I deem it probable that we reach the land this very night. In a few hours, or when we shall have run the distance commanded by the eye, as the light left us, I shall deem it prudent to shorten sail; and I call on all of you to be watchful, lest we unwittingly throw ourselves on the strange shores. Ye know that the sovereigns have graciously promised ten thousand maravedis, yearly, and for life, to him who shall first discover land: to this rich reward, I will add a doublet of velvet, such as it would befit a grandee to wear. Sleep not, then; but, at the turn of the night, be all vigilance and watchfulness. I am now most serious with ye, and look for land this very blessed night."

These encouraging words produced their full effect, the men scattering themselves in the ship, each taking the best position he could, to earn the coveted prizes. Deep expectation is always a quiet feeling, the jealous senses seeming to require silence and intensity of concentration, in order to give them their full exercise. Columbus remained on the poop, while Luis, less interested, threw himself on a sail, and passed the time in musing on Mercedes, and in picturing to himself the joyful moment when he might meet her again, a triumphant and successful adventurer.

The death-like silence that prevailed in the ship, added to the absorbing interest of that important night. At the distance of a mile was the little Niña, gliding on her course with a full sail; while half a league still farther in advance was to be seen the shadowy outline of the Pinta, which preceded her consorts, as the swiftest sailer with a fresh

breeze. Sancho had been round to every sheet and brace, in person, and never before had the admiral's ship held as good way with her consorts as on that night, all three of the vessels appearing to have caught the eager spirit of those they contained, and to be anxious to outdo themselves. At moments the men started, while the wind murmured through the cordage, as if they heard unknown and strange voices from a mysterious world; and fifty times, when the waves combed upon the sides of the ship, did they turn their heads, expecting to see a crowd of unknown beings, fresh from the eastern world, pouring in upon their decks.

As for Columbus, he sighed often; for minutes at a time would he stand looking intently towards the west, like one who strove to penetrate the gloom of night, with organs exceeding human powers. At length he bent his body forward, gazed intently over the weather railing of the ship, and then lifting his cap, he seemed to be offering up his spirit in thanksgiving or prayer. All this Luis witnessed, where he lay: at the next instant he heard himself called.

"Pero Gutierrez — Pedro de Muños — Luis — whatever thou art termed," said Columbus, his fine masculine voice trembling with eagerness,—"come hither, son; tell me if thine eyes accord with mine. Look in this direction — here, more on the vessel's beam; seest thou aught uncommon?"

"I saw a light, Señor; one that resembled a candle, being neither larger nor more brilliant; and to me it appeared to move, as if carried in the hand, or tossed by waves."

"Thy eyes did not deceive thee; thou seest it doth not come of either of our consorts, both of which are here on the bow."

"What do you, then, take this light to signify, Don Christopher?"

"Land! It is either on the land itself, rendered small by distance, or it cometh of some vessel that is a stranger to us, and which belongeth to the Indies. There is Rodrigo Sanchez of Segovia, the comptroller of the fleet, beneath us; descend and bid him come hither."

Luis did as required, and presently the comptroller was

also at the admiral's side. Half an hour passed, and the light was not seen again; then it gleamed upward once or twice, like a torch, and finally disappeared. This circumstance was soon known to all in the ship, though few attached the same importance to it as Columbus himself.

"This is land," quietly observed the admiral, to those near his person: "ere many hours we may expect to behold it. Now ye may pour out your souls in gratitude and confidence, for in such a sign there can be no deception. No phenomenon of the ocean resembleth that light; and my reckoning placeth us in a quarter of the world where land *must* exist, else is the earth no sphere."

Notwithstanding this great confidence on the part of the admiral, most of those in the ship did not yet feel the same certainty in the result, although all felt the strongest hopes of falling in with land next day. Columbus saying no more on the subject, the former silence was soon resumed, and, in a few minutes, every eye was again turned to the west, in anxious watchfulness. In this manner the time passed away, the ships driving ahead with a speed much exceeding that of their ordinary rate of sailing, until the night had turned, when its darkness was suddenly illuminated by a blaze of light, and the report of a gun from the Pinta came struggling up against the fresh breeze of the trades.

"There speaketh Martin Alonzo!" exclaimed the admiral; "and we may be certain that he hath not given the signal idly. Who sitteth on the top-gallant yard, there, on watch for wonders ahead?"

"Señor Don Almirante, it is I," answered Sancho. "I have been here since we sang the vesper hymn."

"Seest thou aught unusual, westward? Look vigilantly, for we touch on mighty things!"

"Nought, Señor, unless it be that the Pinta is lessening her canvass, and the Niña is already closing with our fleet consort — nay, I now see the latter shortening sail, also!"

"For these great tidings, all honour and praise be to God! These are proofs that no false cry hath this time misled their judgments. We will join our consorts, good Bartolemeo, ere we take in a single inch of canvass."

Everything was now in motion on board the Santa Maria,

which went dashing ahead for another half hour, when she came up with the two other caravels, both of which had hauled by the wind, under short canvass, and were forging slowly through the water, on different tacks, like coursers cooling themselves after having terminated a severe struggle by reaching the goal.

"Come hither, Luis," said Columbus, "and feast thine eyes with a sight that doth not often meet the gaze of the best of Christians."

The night was far from dark, a tropical sky glittering with a thousand stars, and even the ocean itself appearing to emit a sombre melancholy light. By the aid of such assistants it was possible to see several miles, and more especially to note objects on the margin of the ocean. When the young man cast his eyes to leeward, as directed by Columbus, he very plainly perceived a point where the blue of the sky ceased, and a dark mound rose from the water, stretching for a few leagues southward, and then terminated, as it had commenced, by a union between the watery margin of the ocean and the void of heaven. The intermediate space had the defined outline, the density, and the hue of land, as seen at midnight.

"Behold the Indies!" said Columbus; "the mighty problem is solved! This is doubtless an island, but a continent is near. Laud be to God!"

CHAPTER VI.

"There is a Power, whose care
Teaches thy way along that pathless coast—
The desert and illimitable air—
Lone wandering, but not lost."

BRYANT.

THE two or three hours that succeeded, were hours of an extraordinary and intense interest. The three vessels stood hovering off the dusky shore, barely keeping at a

safe distance, stripped of most of their canvass, resembling craft that cruised leisurely at a given point, indifferent to haste or speed. As they occasionally and slowly passed each other, words of heart-felt congratulation were exchanged; but no noisy or intemperate exultation was heard on that all-important night. The sensations excited in the adventurers, by their success, were too deep and solemn for any such vulgar exhibition of joy; and perhaps there was not one among them all who did not, at that moment, inwardly confess his profound submission to, and absolute dependence on, a Divine Providence.

Columbus was silent. Emotions like his, seldom find vent in words; but his heart was overflowing with gratitude and love. He believed himself to be in the farther east, and to have reached that part of the world by sailing west; and it is natural to suppose that he expected the curtain of day would rise on some of those scenes of oriental magnificence which had been so eloquently described by the Polos and other travellers in those remote and little-known regions. That this or other islands were inhabited, the little he had seen sufficiently proved; but, as yet, all the rest was conjecture of the wildest and most uncertain character. The fragrance of the land, however, was very perceptible in the vessels, thus affording an opportunity to two of the senses to unite in establishing their success.

At length the long wished-for day approached, and the eastern sky began to assume the tints that precede the appearance of the sun. As the light diffused itself athwart the dark blue ocean, and reached the island, the outlines of the latter became more and more distinct: then objects became visible on its surface, trees, glades, rocks, and irregularities, starting out of the gloom, until the whole picture was drawn in the grey solemn colours of morning. Presently the direct rays of the sun touched it, gilding its prominent points, and throwing others into shadow. It then became apparent that the discovery was that of an island of no great extent, well wooded, and of a verdant and pleasant aspect. The land was low, but possessed an outline sufficiently graceful to cause it to seem a paradise in the eyes of men who had seriously doubted whether they were ever to look on solid ground again. The view of his mo-

ther earth is always pleasant to the mariner who has long gazed on nothing but water and sky; but thrice beautiful did it now seem to men who not only saw in it their despair cured, but their most brilliant hopes revived. From the position of the land near him, Columbus did not doubt that he had passed another island, on which the light had been seen, and, from his known course, this conjecture has since been rendered almost certain.

The sun had scarcely risen, when living beings were seen rushing out of the woods, to gaze in astonishment at the sudden appearance of machines, that were at first mistaken by the untutored islanders, for messengers from heaven. Shortly after, Columbus anchored his little fleet, and landed to take possession in the name of the two sovereigns.

As much state was observed on this occasion as the limited means of the adventurers would allow. Each vessel sent a boat, with her commander. The admiral, attired in scarlet, and carrying the royal standard, proceeded in advance, while Martin Alonzo, and Vicente Yañez Pinzon, followed, holding banners bearing crosses, the symbol of the expedition, with letters representing the initials of the two sovereigns, or F and Y, for Fernando and Ysabel.

The forms usual to such occasions were observed on reaching the shore. Columbus took possession, rendered thanks to God for the success of the expedition, and then began to look about him in order to form some estimate of the value of his discovery.*

* It is a singular fact that the position and name of the precise island that was first fallen in with, on this celebrated voyage, remain to this day, if not a matter of doubt, at least a matter of discussion. By most persons, some of the best authorities included, it is believed that the adventurers made Cat Island, as the place is now called, though the admiral gave it the appellation of San Salvador; while others contend for what is now termed Turk's Island. The reason given for the latter opinion is the position of the island, and the course subsequently steered in order to reach Cuba. Muñoz is of opinion that it was Watling's Island, which lies due east of Cat Island, at the distance of a degree of longitude, or a few hours' run. As respects Turk's Island, the facts do not sustain the theory. The course steered, after quitting the island, was not west, but south-west; and we find Columbus anxious to get south to reach the island of Cuba,

No sooner were the ceremonies observed, than the people crowded round the admiral, and began to pour out their congratulations for his success, with their contrition for their own distrust and disaffection. The scene has often been described as a proof of the waywardness and inconstancy of human judgments; the being who had so lately been scowled on as a reckless and selfish adventurer, being now regarded as little less than a god. The admiral was no more elated by this adulation, than he had been intimidated by the previous dissatisfaction, maintaining his calmness of exterior and gravity of demeanour, with those who pressed around him, though a close observer might have detected the gleaming of triumph in his eye, and the glow of inward rapture on his cheek.

"These honest people are as inconstant in their apprehensions, as they are extreme in their rejoicings," said Columbus to Luis, when liberated a little from the throng; "yesterday they would have cast me into the sea, and today they are much disposed to forget God, himself, in his unworthy creature. Dost not see, that the men who gave us most concern, on account of their discontent, are now the loudest in their applause?"

"This is but nature, Señor; fear flying from panic to exultation. These knaves fancy they are praising you, when they are in truth rejoicing in their own escape from some unknown but dreaded evil. Our friends Sancho and Pepe seem not to be thus overwhelmed, for while the last is gathering flowers from this shore of India, the first seems to be looking about him with commendable coolness, as if he might be calculating the latitude and longitude of the Great Khan's doblas."

Columbus smiled, and, accompanied by Luis, he drew nearer to the two men mentioned, who were a little apart from the rest of the group. Sancho was standing with his hands thrust into the bosom of his doublet, regarding the

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which was described to him by the natives, and which he believed to be Cipango. No reason is given by Muñoz for his opinion; but Watling's Island does not answer the description of the great navigator, while it is so placed as to have lain quite near his course, and was doubtless passed unseen in the darkness. It is thought the light so often observed by Columbus was on this island.

scene with the coolness of a philosopher, and towards him the admiral first directed his steps.

"How is this, Sancho of the Shipyard-Gate!" said the great navigator, "thou lookest on this glorious scene as coolly as thou wouldst regard a street in Moguer, or a field in Andalusia?"

"Señor Don Almirante, the same hand made both. This is not the first island on which I have landed; nor are yonder naked savages the first men I have seen who were not dressed in scarlet doublets."

"But hast thou no feeling for success—no gratitude to God for this vast discovery? Reflect, my friend, we are on the confines of Asia, and yet have we come here by holding a western course."

"That the last is true, Señor, I will swear myself, having held the tiller in mine own hands no small part of the way. Do you think, Señor Don Almirante, that we have come far enough in this direction to have got to the back side of the earth, or to stand, as it might be, under the very feet of Spain?"

"By no means. The realms of the Great Khan will scarcely occupy the position you mean."

"Then, Señor, what will there be to prevent the doblas of that country from falling off into the air, leaving us our journey for our pains?"

"The same power that will prevent our caravels from dropping out of the sea, and the water itself from following. These things depend on natural laws, my friend, and nature is a legislator that will be respected."

"It is all Moorish to me," returned Sancho, rubbing his eye-brows. "Here we are, of a verity, if not actually beneath the feet of Spain, standing, as it might be, on the side of the house; and yet I find no more difficulty in keeping on an even keel, than I did in Moguer—by Santa Clara! less, in some particulars, good solid Xeres wine being far less plenty here than there."

"Thou art no Moor, Sancho, although thy father's name be a secret. And thou, Pepe, what dost thou find in those flowers to draw thy attention so early from all these wonders?"

"Señor, I gather them for Monica. A female hath a

more delicate feeling than a man, and she will be glad to see with what sort of ornaments God hath adorned the Indies."

"Dost thou fancy, Pepe, that thy love can keep those flowers in bloom, until the good caravel shall recross the Atlantic?" demanded Luis, laughing.

"Who knoweth, Señor Gutierrez? A warm heart maketh a thriving nursery. You would do well, too, if you prefer any Castilian lady to all others, to bethink you of her beauty, and gather some of these rare plants to deck her hair."

Columbus now turned away, the natives seeming disposed to approach the strangers, while Luis remained near the young sailor, who still continued to collect the plants of the tropics. In a minute our hero was similarly employed; and long ere the admiral and the wondering islanders had commenced their first parly, he had arranged a gorgeous *bouquet*, which he already fancied in the glossy dark hair of Mercedes.

The events of a public nature that followed, are too familiar to every intelligent reader to need repetition here. After passing a short time at San Salvador, Columbus proceeded to other islands, led on by curiosity, and guided by real or fancied reports of the natives, until the 28th, when he reached that of Cuba. Here he imagined, for a time, that he had found the continent, and he continued coasting it, first in a north-westerly, and then in a south-easterly direction, for near a month. Familiarity with the novel scenes that offered soon lessened their influence, and the inbred feelings of avarice and ambition began to resume their sway in the bosoms of several of those who had been foremost in manifesting their submission to the admiral, when the discovery of land so triumphantly proved the justice of his theories, and the weakness of their own misgivings. Among others who thus came under the influence of their nature, was Martin Alonzo Pinzon, who finding himself almost entirely excluded from the society of the young Count of Llera, in whose eyes he perceived he filled but a very subordinate place, fell back on his own local importance, and began to envy Columbus a glory that he now fancied he might have secured for himself. Hot words

had passed between the admiral and himself, on more than one occasion, before the land was made, and every day something new occurred to increase the coldness between them.

It forms no part of this work to dwell on the events that followed, as the adventurers proceeded from island to island, port to port, and river to river. It was soon apparent that very important discoveries had been made; and the adventurers were led on day by day, pursuing their investigations, and following directions that were ill comprehended, but which, it was fancied, pointed to mines of gold. Everywhere they met with a gorgeous and bountiful nature, scenery that fascinated the eye, and a climate that soothed the senses; but, as yet, man was found living in the simplest condition of the savage state. The delusion of being in the Indies was general, and every intimation that fell from those untutored beings, whether by word or sign, was supposed to have some reference to the riches of the east. All believed that, if not absolutely within the kingdom of the Great Khan, they were at least on its confines. Under such circumstances, when each day actually produced new scenes, promising still greater novelties, few bethought them of Spain, unless it were in connexion with the glory of returning to her, successful and triumphant. Even Luis dwelt less intently in his thoughts on Mercedes, suffering her image, beautiful as it was, to be momentarily supplanted by the unusual spectacles that arose before his physical sight in such constant and unwearied succession. Little substantial, beyond the fertile soil and genial climate, offered, it is true, in the way of realizing all the bright expectations of the adventurers in connexion with pecuniary advantages; but each moment was fraught with hope, and no one knew what a day would bring forth.

Two agents were at length sent into the interior to make discoveries, and Columbus profited by the occasion to careen his vessels. About the time when this mission was expected to return, Luis sallied forth with a party of armed men to meet it, Sancho making one of his escort. The ambassadors were met on their way back at a short day's march from the vessels, accompanied by a few of the natives, who were following with intense curiosity, expecting

at each moment to see their unknown visiters take their flight towards heaven. A short halt was made for the purpose of refreshing themselves, after the two parties had joined; and Sancho, as reckless of danger on the land as on the ocean, stalked into a village that lay near the halting place. Here he endeavoured to make himself as agreeable to the inhabitants, as one of his appearance very well could, by means of signs. Sancho figured in this little hamlet under some such advantages as those that are enjoyed in the country by a great man from town; the spectators not being, as yet, sufficiently sophisticated to distinguish between the cut of a doublet and the manner of wearing it, as between a clown and a noble. He had not been many minutes playing the grandee among these simple beings, when they seemed desirous of offering to him some mark of particular distinction. Presently, a man appeared, holding certain dark-looking and dried leaves, which he held out to the hero of the moment in a deferential manner, as a Turk would offer his dried sweet-meats, or an American his cake. Sancho was about to accept the present, though he would greatly have preferred a dobla, of which he had not seen any since the last received from the admiral, when a forward movement was made by most of the Cubans, who humbly, and with emphasis, uttered the word "tobacco"—"tobacco." On this hint, the person who held forth the offering drew back, repeated the same word in an apologizing manner, and set about making what, it was now plain, was termed a "tobacco," in the language of that country. This was soon effected, by rolling up the leaves in the form of a rude segar, when a "tobacco," duly manufactured, was offered to the seaman. Sancho took the present, nodded his head condescendingly, repeated the words himself, in the best manner he could, and thrust the "tobacco" into his pocket. This movement evidently excited some surprise among the spectators, but, after a little consultation, one of them lighted an end of a roll, applied the other to his mouth, and began to puff forth volumes of a fragrant light smoke, not only to his own infinite satisfaction, but seemingly to that of all around him. Sancho attempted an imitation, which resulted, as is common with the tyro in this accomplishment, in his reeling back to his party with

the pallid countenance of an opium-chewer, and a nausea that he had not experienced since the day he first ventured beyond the bar of Saltes, to issue on the troubled surface of the Atlantic.

This little scene might be termed the introduction of the well-known American weed into civilized society, the misapprehension of the Spaniards, touching the appellation, transferring the name of the roll to the plant itself. Thus did Sancho, of the ship-yard gate, become the first Christian tobacco smoker, an accomplishment in which he was so soon afterwards rivalled by some of the greatest men of his age, and which has extended down to our own times.

On the return of his agents, Columbus again sailed, pushing his way along the north shore of Cuba. While struggling against the trades, with a view to get to the eastward, he found the wind too fresh, and determined to bear up for a favourite haven in the island of Cuba, that he had named Puerto del Principe. With this view a signal was made to call the Pinta down, that vessel being far to windward; and, as night was near, lights were carried in order to enable Martin Alonzo to close with his commander. The next morning, at the dawn of day, when Columbus came on deck, he cast a glance around him, and beheld the Niña, hove-to under his lee, but no signs of the other caravel.

"Have none seen the Pinta?" demanded the admiral, hastily, of Sancho, who stood at the helm.

"Señor, *I* did, as long as eyes could see a vessel that was striving to get out of view. Master Martin Alonzo hath disappeared in the eastern board, while we have been lying-to, here, in waiting for him to come down."

Columbus now perceived that he was deserted by the very man who had once shown so much zeal in his behalf, and who had given, in the act, new proof of the manner in which friendship vanishes before self-interest and cupidity. There had been among the adventurers many reports of the existence of gold mines, obtained from the descriptions of the natives; and the admiral made no doubt that his insubordinate follower had profited by the superior sailing of his caravel, to keep the wind, in the expectation to be the first to reach the Eldorado of their wishes. As the

weather still continued unfavourable, however, the Santa Maria and the Niña returned to port, where they waited for a change. This separation occurred on the 21st of November, at which moment the expedition had not advanced beyond the north coast of Cuba.

From this time until the sixth of the following month, Columbus continued his examination of this noble island, when he crossed what has since been termed the "windward passage," and first touched on the shores of Hayti. All this time, there had been as much communication as circumstances would allow, with the aborigines, the Spaniards making friends wherever they went, as a consequence of the humane and prudent measures of the admiral. It is true that violence had been done, in a few instances, by seizing half a dozen individuals in order to carry them to Spain, as offerings to Doña Isabella; but this act was easily reconcilable to usage in that age, equally on account of the deference that was paid to the kingly authority, and on the ground that the seizures were for the good of the captives' souls.

The adventurers were more delighted with the bold, and yet winning, aspect of Hayti, than they had been with even the adjacent island of Cuba. The inhabitants were found to be handsomer and more civilized than any they had yet seen, while they retained the gentleness and docility that had proved so pleasing to the admiral. Gold, also, was seen among them in considerable quantities; and the Spaniards set on foot a trade of some extent, in which the usual incentive of civilized man was the great aim of one side, and hawk's-bells appear to have been the principal desideratum with the other.

In this manner, and in making hazardous advances along the coast, the admiral was occupied until the 20th of the month, when he reached a point that was said to be in the vicinity of the residence of the Great Cacique of all that portion of the island. This prince, whose name, as spelt by the Spaniards, was Guacanagari, had many tributary caciques, and was understood, from the half-intelligible descriptions of his subjects, to be a monarch that was much beloved. On the 22d, while still lying in the Bay of Acúl, where the vessels had anchored two days previously, a

large canoe was seen entering the haven. It was shortly after announced to the admiral that this boat contained an ambassador from the Great Cacique, who brought presents from his master, with a request that the vessels would move a league or two farther east, and anchor off the town inhabited by the prince himself. The wind preventing an immediate compliance, a messenger was dispatched with a suitable answer, and the ambassador returned. Fatigued with idleness, anxious to see more of the interior, and impelled by a constitutional love of adventure, Luis, who had struck up a hasty friendship with a young man called Mattinao, who attended the ambassador, asked permission to accompany him, taking his passage in the canoe. Columbus gave his consent to this proposal with a good deal of reluctance, the rank and importance of our hero inducing him to avoid the consequences of any treachery or accident. The importunity of Luis finally prevailed, however, and he departed with many injunctions to be discreet, being frequently admonished of the censure that would await the admiral in the event of anything serious occurring. As a precaution, too, Sancho Mundo was directed to accompany the young man, in this chivalrous adventure, in the capacity of an esquire.

No weapon more formidable than a blunt arrow having yet been seen in the hands of the natives, the young Count de Llera declined taking his mail, going armed only with a trusty sword, the temper of which had been tried on many a Moorish corslet and helm, in his foot encounters, and protected by a light buckler. An arquebuse had been put into his hand, but he refused it, as a weapon unsuited to knightly hands, and as betraying a distrust that was not merited by the previous conduct of the natives. Sancho, however, was less scrupulous, and accepted the weapon. In order, moreover, to divert the attention of his followers from a concession that the admiral felt to be a departure from his own rigid laws, Luis and his companions landed and entered the canoe at a point concealed from the vessels, in order that their absence might not be known. It is owing to these circumstances, as well as to the general mystery that was thrown about the connexion of the young grandee with the expedition, that the occurrences we are about to

relate were never entered by the admiral in his journal, and have, consequently, escaped the prying eyes of the various historians who have subsequently collected so much from that pregnant document.

CHAPTER VII.

> "Thou seemest to fancy's eye
> An animated blossom born in air;
> Which breathes and bourgeons in the golden sky,
> And sheds its odours there."
>
> SUTERMEISTER.

NOTWITHSTANDING his native resolution, and an indifference to danger that amounted to recklessness, Luis did not find himself alone with the Haytians without, at least, a lively consciousness of the novelty of his situation. Still, nothing occurred to excite uneasiness, and he continued his imperfect communications with his new friends, occasionally throwing in a remark to Sancho in Spanish, who merely wanted encouragement to discourse by the hour. Instead of following the boat of the Santa Maria, on board which the ambassador had embarked, the canoe pushed on several leagues farther east, it being understood that Luis was not to present himself in the town of Guacanagari, until after the arrival of the ships, when he was to rejoin his comrades stealthily, or in a way not to attract attention.

Our hero would not have been a true lover, had he remained indifferent to the glories of the natural scenery that lay spread before his eyes, as he thus coasted the shores of Española. The boldness of the landscape, as in the Mediterranean, was relieved by the softness of a low latitude, which throws some such witchery around rocks and promontories, as a sunny smile lends to female beauty. More than once did he burst out into exclamations of delight, and as often did Sancho respond in the same temper, if not exactly in the same language, the latter conceiving

it to be a sort of duty to echo all that the young noble said, in the way of poetry.

"I take it, Señor Conde," observed the seaman, when they had reached a spot several leagues beyond that where the launch of the ship had put to shore; "I take it for granted, Señor Conde, that your excellency knoweth whither these naked gentry are paddling, all this time. They seem in a hurry, and have a port in their minds, if it be not in view."

"Art thou uneasy, friend Sancho, that thou puttest thy question thus earnestly?"

"If I am, Don Luis, it is altogether on account of the family of Bobadilla, which would lose its head, did any mishap befall your excellency. What is it to Sancho, of the ship-yard gate, whether he is married to some princess in Cipango, and gets to be adopted by the Great Khan, or whether he is an indifferent mariner out of Moguer? It is very much as if one should offer him the choice between wearing a doublet and eating garlic, and going naked on sweet fruits and a full stomach. I take it, Señor, your excellency would not willingly exchange the castle of Llera for the palace of this Great Cacique?"

"Thou art right, Sancho; even rank must depend on the state of society in which we live. A Castilian noble cannot envy a Haytian sovereign."

"More especially, since my lord, the Señor Don Almirante, hath publicly proclaimed, that our gracious lady, the Doña Isabella, is henceforth and for ever to be queen over him," returned Sancho, with a knowing glance of the eye. "Little do these worthy people understand the honour that is in store for them, and least of all, his Highness, King Guacanagari!"

"Hush, Sancho, and keep thy unpleasant intimations in thine own breast. Our friends turn the head of the canoe towards yonder river's mouth, and seem bent on landing."

By this time, indeed, the natives had coasted as far as they intended, and were turning in towards the entrance of a small stream, which, taking its rise among the noble mountains that were grouped inland, found its way through a smiling valley to the ocean. This stream was neither broad nor deep, but it contained far more than water suf-

ficient for any craft used by the natives. Its banks were fringed with bushes; and as they glided up it, Luis saw fifty sites where he thought he could be content to pass his life, provided, always, that it might possess the advantage of Mercedes's presence. It is scarcely necessary to add, too, that in all these scenes he fancied his mistress attired in the velvets and laces that were then so much used by high-born dames, and that he saw her natural grace, embellished by the courtly ease and polished accessaries of one who lived daily, if not hourly, in the presence of her royal mistress.

As the canoe shut in the coast, by entering between the two points that formed the river's mouth, Sancho pointed out to the young noble a small fleet of canoes, that was coming down before the wind from the eastward, apparently bound, like so many more they had seen that day, to the bay of Acúl, on a visit to the wonderful strangers. The natives in the canoe also beheld this little flotilla, which was driving before the wind under cotton sails, and by their smiles and signs showed that they gave it the same destination. About this time, too, or just as they entered the mouth of the stream, Mattinao drew from under a light cotton robe, that he occasionally wore, a thin circlet of pure gold, which he placed upon his head, in the manner of a coronet. This Luis knew was a token that he was a cacique, one of those who were tributary to Guacanagari, and he arose to salute him at this evidence of his rank, an act that was imitated by all of the Haytians also. From this assumption of state, Luis rightly imagined that Mattinao had now entered within the limits of a territory that acknowledged his will. From the moment that the young cacique threw aside his incognito, he ceased to paddle, but assuming an air of authority and dignity, he attempted to converse with his guest in the best manner their imperfect means of communication would allow. He often pronounced the word, Ozema, and Luis inferred from the manner in which he used it, that it was the name of a favourite wife, it having been already ascertained by the Spaniards, or at least it was thought to be ascertained, that the caciques indulged in polygamy, while they rigidly restricted their subjects to one wife.

The canoe ascended the river several miles, until it reached one of those tropical valleys in which nature seems to expend her means of rendering this earth inviting. While the scenery had much of the freedom of a wilderness, the presence of man for centuries had deprived it of all its ruder and more savage features. Like those who tenanted it, the spot possessed the perfection of native grace, unfettered and uninvaded by any of the more elaborate devices of human expedients. The dwellings were not without beauty, though simple as the wants of their owners; the flowers bloomed in mid-winter, and the generous branches still groaned with the weight of their nutritious and palatable fruits.

Mattinao was received by his people with an eager curiosity, blended with profound respect. His mild subjects crowded around Luis and Sancho, with some such wonder as a civilized man would gaze at one of the prophets, were he to return to earth in the flesh. They had heard of the arrival of the ships, but they did not the less regard their inmates as visiters from heaven. This, probably, was not the opinion of the more elevated in rank, for, even in the savage state, the vulgar mind is far from being that of the favoured few. Whether it was owing to his greater facility of character, and to habits that more easily adapted themselves to the untutored notions of the Indians, or to their sense of propriety, Sancho soon became the favourite with the multitude; leaving the Count of Llera more especially to the care of Mattinao, and the principal men of his tribe. Owing to this circumstance, the two Spaniards were soon separated, Sancho being led away by the *oi polloi* to a sort of square in the centre of the village, leaving Don Luis in the habitation of the Cacique.

No sooner did Mattinao find himself in the company of our hero, and that of two of his confidential chiefs, than the name of Ozema was repeated eagerly among the Indians. A rapid conversation followed, a messenger was dispatched, Luis knew not whither, and then the chiefs took their departure, leaving the young Castilian alone with the Cacique. Laying aside his golden band, and placing a cotton robe about his person, which had hitherto been nearly naked, Mattinao made a sign for his companion to follow him, and

left the building. Throwing the buckler over his shoulder, and adjusting the belt of his sword in a way that the weapon should not incommode him in walking, Luis obeyed with as much confidence as he would have followed a friend along the streets of Seville.

Mattinao led the way through a wilderness of sweets, where tropical plants luxuriated beneath the branches of trees loaded with luscious fruits, holding his course by a foot-path which lay on the banks of a torrent that flowed from a ravine, and poured its waters into the river below. The distance he went might have been half a mile. Here he reached a cluster of rustic dwellings that occupied a lovely terrace on a hill-side, where they overlooked the larger town below the river, and commanded a view of the distant ocean. Luis saw at a glance that this sweet retreat was devoted to the uses of the gentler sex, and he doubted not that it formed a species of seraglio, set apart for the wives of the young cacique. He was led into one of the principal dwellings, where the simple but grateful refreshments used by the natives, were again offered to him.

The intercourse of a month had not sufficed to render either party very familiar with the language of the other. A few of the commoner words of the Indians had been caught by the Spaniards, and perhaps Luis was one of the most ready in their use; still, it is highly probable, he was oftener wrong than right, even when he felt the most confident of his success. But the language of friendship is not easily mistaken, and our hero had not entertained a feeling of distrust from the time he left the ships, down to the present moment.

Mattinao had dispatched a messenger to an adjacent dwelling when he entered that in which Luis was now entertained, and when sufficient time had been given for the last to refresh himself, the cacique arose, and by a courteous gesture, such as might have become a master of ceremonies in the court of Isabella, he again invited the young grandee to follow. They took their way along the terrace, to a house larger than common, and which evidently contained several subdivisions, as they entered into a sort of ante-room. Here they remained but a minute; the cacique, after a short parley with a female, removing a curtain in-

geniously made of sea-weed, and leading the way to an inner apartment. It had but a single occupant, whose character Luis fancied to be announced in the use of the single word "Ozema," that the cacique uttered in a low affectionate tone, as they entered. Luis bowed to this Indian beauty, as profoundly as he could have made his reverence to a high-born damsel of Spain; then, recovering himself, he fastened one long steady look of admiration on the face of the curious but half-frightened young creature who stood before him, and exclaimed, in such tones as only indicate rapture, admiration and astonishment mingled—

"Mercedes!"

The young cacique repeated this name in the best manner he could, evidently mistaking it for a Spanish term to express admiration, or satisfaction; while the trembling young thing, who was the subject of all this wonder, shrunk back a step, blushed, laughed, and muttered in her soft low musical voice, "Mercedes," as the innocent take up and renew any source of their harmless pleasures. She then stood, with her arms folded meekly on her bosom, resembling a statue of wonder. But it may be necessary to explain why, at a moment so peculiar, the thoughts and tongue of Luis had so suddenly resorted to his mistress. In order to do this, we shall first attempt a short description of the person and appearance of Ozema, as was, in fact, the name of the Indian beauty.

All the accounts agree in describing the aborigines of the West Indies, as being singularly well formed, and of a natural grace in their movements, that extorted a common admiration among the Spaniards. Their colour was not unpleasant, and the inhabitants of Hayti, in particular, were said to be but very little darker than the people of Spain. Those who were but little exposed to the bright sun of that climate, and who dwelt habitually beneath the shades of groves, or in the retirement of their dwellings, like persons of similar habits in Europe, might, by comparison, have even been termed fair. Such was the fact with Ozema, who, instead of being the wife of the young cacique, was his only sister. According to the laws of Hayti, the authority of a cacique was transmitted through females, and a son of Ozema was looked forward to, as the heir of his

uncle. Owing to this fact, and to the circumstances that the true royal line, if a term so dignified can be applied to a state of society so simple, was reduced to these two individuals, Ozema had been more than usually fostered by the tribe, leaving her free from care, and as little exposed to hardships, as at all comported with the condition of her people. She had reached her eighteenth year, without having experienced any of those troubles and exposures which are more or less the inevitable companions of savage life; though it was remarked by the Spaniards, that all the Indians they had yet seen seemed more than usually free from evils of this character. They owed this exemption to the generous quality of the soil, the genial warmth of the climate, and the salubrity of the air. In a word, Ozema, in her person, possessed just those advantages that freedom from restraint, native graces, and wild luxuriance, might be supposed to lend the female form, under the advantages of a mild climate, a healthful and simple diet, and perfect exemption from exposure, care, or toil. It would not have been difficult to fancy Eve such a creature, when she first appeared to Adam, fresh from the hands of her divine creator, modest, artless, timid, and perfect.

The Haytians used a scanty dress, though it shocked none of their opinions to go forth in the garb of nature. Still, few of rank were seen without some pretensions to attire, which was worn rather as an ornament, or a mark of distinction, than as necessary either to usage or to comfort. Ozema herself, formed no exception to the general rule. A cincture of Indian cloth, woven in gay colours, circled her slender waist, and fell nearly as low as her knees; a robe of spotless cotton, inartificially made, but white as the driven snow, and of a texture so fine that it might have shamed many of the manufactures of our own days, fell like a scarf across a shoulder, and was loosely united at the opposite side, dropping in folds nearly to the ground. Sandals, of great ingenuity and beauty, protected the soles of feet that a queen might have envied; and a large plate of pure gold, rudely wrought, was suspended from her neck by a string of small but gorgeous shells. Bracelets of the latter were on her pretty wrists, and two light bands of gold encircled ankles that were as faultless

as those of the Venus of Naples. In that region, the fineness of the hair was thought the test of birth, with better reason than many imagine the feet and hands to be, in civilized life. As power and rank had passed from female to female in her family, for several centuries, the hair of Ozema was silken, soft, waving, exuberant, and black as jet. It covered her shoulders, like a glorious mantle, and fell as low as her simple cincture. So light and silken was this natural veil, that its ends waved in the gentle current of air that was rather breathing than blowing through the apartment.

Although this extraordinary creature was much the loveliest specimen of young womanhood that Luis had seen among the wild beauties of the islands, it was not so much her graceful and well-rounded form, or even the charms of face and expression, that surprised him, as a decided and accidental resemblance to the being he had left in Spain, and who had so long been the idol of his heart. This resemblance alone had caused him to utter the name of his mistress, in the manner related. Could the two have been placed together, it would have been easy to detect marked points of difference between them, without being reduced to compare the intellectual and thoughtful expression of our heroine's countenance, with the wondering, doubting, half-startled look of Ozema; but still the general likeness was so strong, that no person who was familiar with the face of one, could fail to note it on meeting with the other. Side by side, it would have been discovered that the face of Mercedes had the advantage in finesse and delicacy; that her features and brow were nobler; her eye more illuminated by the intelligence within; her smile more radiant with thought and the feelings of a cultivated woman; her blush more sensitive, betraying most of the consciousness of conventional habits; and that the expression generally was much more highly cultivated, than that which sprung from the artless impulses and limited ideas of the young Haytian. Nevertheless, in mere beauty, in youth, and tint, and outline, the disparity was scarcely perceptible, while the resemblance was striking; and, on the score of animation, native frankness, ingenuousness, and all that witchery which ardent and undisguised feeling lends to woman,

many might have preferred the confiding *abandon* of the beautiful young Indian, to the more trained and dignified reserve of the Castilian heiress. What in the latter was earnest, high-souled, native, but religious enthusiasm, in the other was merely the outpourings of unguided impulses, which, however feminine in their origin, were but little regulated in their indulgence.

"Mercedes!" exclaimed our hero, when this vision of Indian loveliness unexpectedly broke on his sight. "Mercedes!" repeated Mattinao; "Mercedes!" murmured Ozema, recoiling a step, blushing, laughing, and then resuming her innocent confidence, as she several times uttered the same word, which she also mistook for an expression of admiration, in her own low, melodious voice.

Conversation being out of the question, there remained nothing for the parties but to express their feelings by signs and acts of amity. Luis had not come on his little expedition unprovided with presents. Anticipating an interview with the wife of the cacique, he had brought up from the village below, several articles that he supposed might suit her untutored fancy. But the moment he beheld the vision that actually stood before him, they all seemed unworthy of such a being. In one of his onsets against the Moors, he had brought off a turban of rich but light cloth, and he had kept it as a trophy, occasionally wearing it, in his visits to the shore, out of pure caprice, and as a sort of ornament that might well impose on the simple-minded natives. These vagaries excited no remarks, as mariners are apt to indulge their whims in this manner, when far from the observations of those to whom they habitually defer. This turban was on his head at the moment he entered the apartment of Ozema, and, overcome with the delight of finding so unexpected a resemblance, and, possibly, excited by so unlooked-for an exhibition of feminine loveliness, he gallantly unrolled it, threw out the folds of rich cloth, and cast it over the shoulders of the beautiful Ozema as a mantle.

The expressions of gratitude and delight that escaped this unsophisticated young creature, were warm, sincere, and undisguised. She cast the ample robe on the ground before her, repeated the word "Mercedes," again and

again, and manifested her pleasure with all the warmth of a generous and ingenuous nature. If we were to say that this display of Ozema was altogether free from the child-like rapture that was, perhaps, inseparable from her ignorance, it would be attributing to her benighted condition the experience and regulated feelings of advanced civilization; but, notwithstanding the guileless simplicity with which she betrayed her emotions, her delight was not without much of the dignity and tone that usually mark the conduct of the superior classes all over the world. Luis fancied it as graceful as it was *naïve* and charming. He endeavoured to imagine the manner in which the Lady of Valverde might receive an offering of precious stones from the gracious hands of Doña Isabella, and he even thought it very possible that the artless grace of Ozema was not far behind what he knew would be the meek self-respect, mingled with grateful pleasure, that Mercedes could not fail to exhibit.

While thoughts like these were passing through his mind, the Indian girl laid aside her own less enticing robe, without a thought of shame, and then she folded her faultless form in the cloth of the turban. This was no sooner done, with a grace and freedom peculiar to her unfettered mind, than she drew the necklace of shells from her person, and advancing a step or two towards our hero, extended the offering with a half-averted face, though the laughing and willing eyes more than supplied the place of language. Luis accepted the gift with suitable eagerness, nor did he refrain from using the Castilian gallantry of kissing the pretty hand from which he took the bauble.

The cacique, who had been a pleased spectator of all that passed, now signed for the count to follow him, leading the way towards another dwelling. Here Don Luis was introduced to other young females, and to two or three children, the former of whom, he soon discovered, were the wives of Mattinao, and the latter his offspring. By dint of gestures, a few words, and such other means of explanation as were resorted to between the Spaniards and the natives, he now succeeded in ascertaining the real affinity which existed between the cacique and Ozema. Our hero felt a sensation like pleasure when he discovered that the Indian beauty was not married; and he was fain to refer

the feeling—perhaps justly—to a sort of jealous sensitiveness that grew out of her resemblance to Mercedes.

The remainder of that, and the whole of the three following days, were passed by Luis with his friend, the cacique, in this, the favourite and sacred residence of the latter. Of course our hero was, if anything, a subject of greater interest to all his hosts, than they could possibly be to him. They took a thousand innocent liberties with his person; examining his dress, and the ornaments he wore, not failing to compare the whiteness of his skin with the redder tint of that of Mattinao. On these occasions Ozema was the most reserved and shy, though her look followed every movement, and her pleased countenance denoted the interest she felt in all that concerned the stranger. Hours at a time, did Luis lie stretched on fragrant mats near this artless and lovely creature, studying the wayward expression of her features, in the fond hope of seeing stronger and stronger resemblances to Mercedes, and sometimes losing himself in that which was peculiarly her own. In the course of the time passed in these dwellings, efforts were made by the count to obtain some useful information of the island; and whether it was owing to her superior rank, or to a native superiority of mind, or to a charm of manner, he soon fancied that the cacique's beautiful sister succeeded better in making him understand her meaning, than either of the wives of Mattinao, or the cacique himself. To Ozema, then, Luis put most of his questions; and ere the day had passed, this quick-witted and attentive girl had made greater progress in opening an intelligible understanding between the adventurers and her countrymen, than had been accomplished by the communications of the two previous months. She caught the Spanish words with a readiness that seemed instinctive, pronouncing them with an accent that only rendered them prettier and softer to the ear.

Luis de Bobadilla was just as good a Catholic as a rigid education, a wandering life, and the habits of the camp, would be apt to make one of his rank, years, and temperament. Still, that was an age in which most laymen had a deep reverence for religion, whether they actually submitted to its purifying influence, or not. If there were any free-

thinkers, at all, they existed principally among those who passed their lives in their closets, or were to be found among the churchmen, themselves; who often used the cowl as a hood to conceal their infidelity. His close association with Columbus, too, had contributed to strengthen our hero's tendency to believe in the constant supervision of Providence; and he now felt a strong inclination to fancy that this extraordinary facility of Ozema's in acquiring languages, was one of its semi-miraculous provisions, made with a view to further the introduction of the religion of the cross among her people. Often did he flatter himself, as he sat gazing into the sparkling, and yet mild, eyes of the girl, listening to her earnest efforts to make him comprehend her meaning, that he was to be the instrument of bringing about this great good, through so young and charming an agent. The admiral had also enjoined on him the importance of ascertaining, if possible, the position of the mines, and he had actually succeeded in making Ozema comprehend his questions on a subject that was all-engrossing with most of the Spaniards. Her answers were less intelligible, but Luis thought they never could be sufficiently full; flattering himself, the whole time, that he was only labouring to comply with the wishes of Columbus.

The day after his arrival, our hero was treated to an exhibition of some of the Indian games. These sports have been too often described to need repetition here; but, in all their movements and exercises, which were altogether pacific, the young princess was conspicuous for grace and skill. Luis, too, was required to show his powers, and being exceedingly athletic and active, he easily bore away the palm from his friend Mattinao. The young cacique manifested neither jealousy nor disappointment at this result, while his sister laughed and clapped her hands with delight, when he was outdone, even at his own sports, by the greater strength or greater efforts of his guest. More than once, the wives of Mattinao seemed to utter gentle reproaches at this exuberance of feeling, but Ozema answered with smiling taunts, and Luis thought her, at such moments, more beautiful than even imagination could draw, and perhaps with justice; for her cheeks were flushed, her

eyes became as brilliant as ornaments of jet, and the teeth that were visible between lips like cherries, resembled rows of ivory. We have said that the eyes of Ozema were black, differing in this particular, from the deep-blue melancholy orbs of the enthusiastic Mercedes; but still they were alike, so often uttering the same feelings, more especially touching matters in which Luis was concerned. More than once, during the trial of strength, did the young man fancy that the expression of the rapture which fairly danced in the eyes of Ozema, was the very counterpart of that of the deep-seated delight which had so often beamed on him, from the glances of Mercedes in the tourney; and, at such times, it struck him that the resemblance between the two was so strong as, after some allowance had been made for dress and other sufficiently striking circumstances, to render them almost identical.

The reader is not to suppose from this, that our hero was actually inconstant to his ancient love. Far from it. Mercedes was too deeply enshrined in his heart—and Luis, with all his faults, was as warm-hearted and true-hearted a cavalier as breathed—to be so easily dispossessed. But he was young, distant from her he had so long adored, and was, withal, not altogether insensible to admiration so artlessly and winningly betrayed by the Indian girl. Had there been the least immodest glance, any proof that art or design lay at the bottom of Ozema's conduct, he would at once have taken the alarm, and been completely disenthralled from his temporary delusion; but, on the contrary, all was so frank and natural with this artless girl; when she most betrayed the hold he had taken of her imagination, it was done with a simplicity so obvious, a *naïveté* so irrepressible, and an ingenuousness so clearly the fruit of innocence, that it was impossible to suspect artifice. In a word, our hero merely showed that he was human, by yielding in a certain degree to a fascination that, under the circumstances, might well have made deeper inroads on the faith even of men who enjoyed much better reputations for stability of purpose.

In situations of so much novelty, time flies swiftly, and Luis himself was astonished when, on looking back, he remembered that he had now been several days with Mat-

tinao, most of which period had actually been passed in what might not inaptly be termed the seraglio of the cacique. Sancho of the ship-yard gate had not been in the least neglected all this time. He had been a hero, in his own circle, as well as the young noble, nor had he been at all forgetful of his duty on the subject of searching for gold. Though he had neither acquired a single word of the Haytian language, nor taught a syllable of Spanish to even one of the laughing nymphs who surrounded him, he had decorated the persons of many of them with hawk's-bells, and had contrived to abstract from them, in return, every ornament that resembled the precious metal, which they possessed. This transfer, no doubt, was honestly effected, however, having been made on that favourite principle of the free trade theorists, which maintains that trade is merely an exchange of equivalents; overlooking all the adverse circumstances which may happen, just at the moment, to determine the standard of value. Sancho had his notions of commerce as well as the modern philosophers, and, as he and Luis occasionally met during their sojourn with Mattinao, he revealed a few of his opinions on this interesting subject, in one of their interviews.

"I perceive thou hast not forgotten thy passion for doblas, friend Sancho," said Luis, laughing, as the old seaman exhibited the store of dust and golden plates he had collected; "there is sufficient of the metal in thy sack to coin a score of them, each having the royal countenances of our lord the King, and our lady the Queen!"

"Double that, Señor Conde; just double that, and all for the price of some seventeen hawk's-bells, that cost but a handful of maravedis. By the mass! this is a most just and holy trade, and such as it becomes us Christians to carry on. Here are these savages, they think no more of gold than your excellency thinks of a dead Moor, and to be revenged on them, I hold a hawk's-bell just as cheap. Let them think as poorly as they please of their ornaments and yellow dust, they will find me just as willing to part with the twenty hawk's-bells that remain. Let them barter away, they will find me as ready as they possibly can be, to give nothing for nothing."

"Is this quite honest, Sancho, to rob an Indian of his

gold, in exchange for a bauble that copper so easily purchaseth? Remember thou art a Castilian, and henceforth give *two* hawk's-bells, where thou hast hitherto given but *one*."

"I never forget my birth, Señor, for happily the ship-yard of Moguer is in old Spain. Is not the value of a thing to be settled by what it will bring in the market? ask any of our traders and they will tell you this, which is clear as the sun in the heavens. When the Venetians lay before Candia, grapes and figs, and Greek wine, could be had for the asking in that island, while western articles commanded any price. Oh, nothing is plainer than the fact that every thing hath its price, and it is real trade to give one worthless commodity for another."

"If it be honest to profit by the ignorance of another," answered Luis, who had a nobleman's contempt for commerce, "then it is just to deceive the child and the idiot."

"God forbid, and especially St. Andrew, my patron, that I should do anything so wicked. Hawk's-bells are of more account than gold, in Hayti, Señor, and happening to know it, I am willing to part with the precious things for the dross. You see I am generous instead of being avaricious, for all parties are in Hayti, where the value of the articles must be settled. It is true, that after running great risks at sea, and undergoing great pains and chances, by carrying this gold to Spain, I may be requited for my trouble, and get enough benefit to make an honest livelihood. I hope Doña Isabella will have so much feeling for these, her new subjects, as to prevent their ever going into the shipping business,—a most laborious and dangerous calling, as we both well know."

"And why art thou so particular in desiring this favour in behalf of these poor islanders, and that too, Sancho, at the expense of thine own bones?"

"Simply, Señor," answered the knave, with a cunning leer, "lest it unsettle trade, which ought to be as free and unencumbered as possible. Here, now, if we Spaniards come to Hayti, we sell one hawk's-bell for a dobla in gold; whereas, were we to give these savages the trouble to come to Spain, a dobla of their gold would buy a hundred hawk's-bells! No—no—it is right as it is; and may a double

allowance of Purgatory be the lot of him who wishes to throw any difficulties in the way of a good, honest, free and civilizing trade, say I."

Sancho was thus occupied in explaining his notions of free trade, the great mystification of modern philanthropists, when there arose such a cry in the village of Mattinao, as is only heard in moments of extreme jeopardy and sudden terror. The conversation took place in the grove, about midway between the town and the private dwellings of the cacique; and so implicit had become the confidence the two Spaniards reposed in their friends, that neither had any other arms about his person, than those furnished by nature. Luis had left both sword and buckler, half an hour earlier, at the feet of Ozema, who had been enacting a mimic hero, with his weapons, for their mutual diversion; while Sancho had found the arquebuse much too heavy to be carried about for a plaything. The last was deposited in the room where he had taken up his comfortable quarters.

"Can this mean treachery, Señor?" exclaimed Sancho. "Have these blackguards found out the true value of hawk's-bells, after all, and do they mean to demand the balance due them?"

"My life on it, Mattinao and all his people are true, Sancho. This uproar hath a different meaning—hark! is not that the cry of 'Caonabo?'"

"The very same, Señor! That is the name of the Carib cacique, who is the terror of all these tribes."

"Thy arquebuse, Sancho, if possible; then join me at the dwellings above. Ozema and the wives of our good friend must be defended, at every hazard!"

Luis had no sooner given these orders, than he and Sancho separated, the latter running towards the town, which by this time was a scene of wild tumult, while our hero, slowly and sullenly, retired towards the private dwellings of the cacique, occasionally looking back, as if he longed to plunge into the thickest of the fray. Twenty times did he wish for his favourite charger and a stout lance, when, indeed, it would not have been an extraordinary feat for a knight of his prowess to put to flight a thousand enemies like those who now menaced him. Often had he singly broken whole ranks of Christian foot-soldiers, and it is well

known that solitary individuals, when mounted, subsequently drove hundreds of the natives before them.

The alarm reached the dwellings of Mattinao before our hero. When he entered the house of Ozema, he found its mistress surrounded by fifty females, some of whom had already ascended from the town below, each of whom was eagerly uttering the terrible name of "Caonabo." Ozema herself was the most collected of them all, though it was apparent that, from some cause, she was an object of particular solicitude with those around her. As Luis entered the apartment, the wives of Mattinao were pressing around the princess; and he soon gathered from their words and entreaties, that they urged her to fly, lest she should fall into the hands of the Carib chief. He even fancied, and he fancied it justly, that the rest of the females supposed the seizure of the cacique's beautiful sister to be the real object of the sudden attack. This conjecture in no manner lessened Luis's ardour in the defence. The moment Ozema caught sight of him, she flew to his side, clasping her hands, and uttering the name of "Caonabo," in a tone that would have melted a heart of stone. At the same time, her eyes spoke a language of hope, confidence and petition that was not necessary to enlist our hero's resolution on her side. In a moment the sword of the young cavalier was in his hand, and the buckler on his arm. He then assured the princess of his zeal, in the best manner he could, by placing the buckler before her throbbing breast, and waving the sword, as in defiance of her enemies: no sooner was this pledge given, than every other female disappeared, some flying to the rescue of their children, and all endeavouring to find places of concealment. By this singular and unexpected desertion, Luis found himself, for the first time since they had met, alone with Ozema.

To remain in the house would be to suffer the enemy to approach unseen, and the shrieks and cries sufficiently announced that, each moment, the danger drew nearer. Luis accordingly made a sign for the girl to follow him, first rolling the turban into a bundle and placing it on her arm, that it might serve her, at need, as a species of shield against the hostile arrows. While he was thus employed, Ozema's head fell upon his breast, and the excited girl burst into

tears. This display of weakness, however, lasted but a moment, when she aroused herself, smiled through her tears, pressed the arm of Luis convulsively and became the Indian heroine again. They then left the building together.

Luis soon perceived that his retreat from the house had not been made a moment too soon. The family of Mattinao had already disappeared, and a strong party of the invaders was in full view, rushing madly up the grove, silent, but evidently bent on seizing their prey. He felt Ozema, who clung to his arm, tremble violently, and then he heard her murmuring,—

"Caonabo,—no—no—no!"

The young Indian princess had caught the Spanish monosyllable of dissent, and Luis understood this exclamation to express her strong disinclination to become a wife of the Carib chief. His resolution to protect her, or to die, was in no manner lessened by this involuntary betrayal of her feelings, which he could not but think might have some connexion with himself; for, while our hero was both honourable and generous, he was human, and, consequently, well disposed to take a favourable view of his own powers of pleasing. It was only in connexion with Mercedes, that Luis de Bobadilla was humble.

A soldier almost from childhood, the young count looked hastily around him for a position that would favour his means of defence, and which would render his arms the most available. Luckily, one offered so near him, that it required but a minute to occupy it. The terrace lay against a precipice of rocks, and, a hundred feet from the house, was a spot where the face of this precipice was angular, throwing forward a wall on each side to some distance, while the cliff above overhung the base sufficiently to remove all danger from falling stones. In the angle were several large fragments of rock that would afford shelter against arrows, and, there being a sufficient space of greensward before them, on which a knight might well display his prowess when in possession of this position, our hero felt himself strong, if not impregnable, since he could be assailed only in front. Ozema was stationed behind one of the fragments of the fallen rocks, her person only half concealed, how-

ever, concern for Luis, and curiosity as related to her enemies, equally inducing her to expose her head and beautiful bust.

Luis was scarcely in possession of this post, ere a dozen Indians were drawn up in a line at the distance of fifty yards in his front. They were armed with bows, war-clubs, and spears. Being without other defensive armour than his buckler, the young man would have thought his situation sufficiently critical, did he not know that the archery of the natives was anything but formidable. Their arrows would kill, certainly, when shot at short distances, and against the naked skin, but it might be questioned if they would penetrate the stout velvet in which Luis was encased, and fifty yards was not near enough to excite undue alarm. The young man did not dare to retreat to the rocks, as a clear space was indispensable for the free use of his good sword, and to that weapon alone he looked for his eventual triumph.

It was, perhaps, fortunate for our hero that Caonabo himself was not with the party which beleagured him. That redoubtable chieftain, who had been led to a distance in pursuit of the flying females, under a belief that she he sought was among them, would doubtless have brought the matter to an immediate issue by a desperate charge, when numbers might have prevailed against courage and skill. The actual assailants chose a different course, and began to poise their bows. One of the most skilful among them drew an arrow to the head, and let it fly. The missile glanced from the buckler of the knight, and struck the hill behind him, as lightly as if the parties had been at their idle sports. Another followed, and Luis turned it aside with his sword, disdaining to raise his shield against such a trifle. This cool manner of receiving their assaults caused the Indians to raise a shout, whether in admiration or rage, Luis could not tell.

The next attack was more judicious, being made on a principle that Napoleon is said to have adopted in directing discharges of his artillery. All those who had bows, some six or eight, drew their arrows together, and the weapons came rattling on the buckler of the assailed in a single flight. It was not easy to escape altogether from such a

combined assault, and our hero received one or two bruises from glancing arrows, though no blood followed the blows. A second attempt of the same nature was about to be made, when the alarmed girl rushed from her place of concealment, and, like the Pocahontas of our own history, threw herself before Luis, with her arms meekly placed on her bosom. As soon as she appeared, there was a cry of "Ozema" — "Ozema," among the assailants, who were not Caribs, as all will understand who are familiar with the island history, but milder Haytians, governed by a Carib chief.

In vain Luis endeavoured to persuade the devoted girl to withdraw. She thought his life in danger, and no language, had he been able to exert his eloquence on the occasion, could have induced her to leave him exposed to such a danger. As the Indians were endeavouring to obtain chances at the person of Luis without killing the princess, he saw there remained no alternative but a retreat behind the fragments of rock. Just as he obtained this temporary security, a fierce-looking warrior joined the assailants, who immediately commenced a vociferous explanation of the actual state of the attack.

"Caonabo?" demanded Luis, of Ozema, pointing towards the new-comer.

The girl shook her head, after taking an anxious look at the stranger's face, at the same time clinging to our hero's arm, with seductive dependence.

"No—no—no—" she said, eagerly. "No Caonabo—no—no—no."

Luis understood the first part of this answer to mean that the stranger was not the Carib chief; and the last to signify Ozema's strong and settled aversion to becoming his wife.

The consultation among the assailants was soon ended. Six of them then poised their war-clubs and spears, and made a rush for the citadel of the besieged. When they were within twenty feet of his cover, our hero sprang lightly forward on the sward to meet his foes. Two of the spears he received on his buckler, severing both shafts with a single blow of his keen and highly-tempered sword. As he recovered from the effort, with an upward cut he met

the raised arm of the club-man most in advance. Hand and club fell at his feet with the skilful touch. Making a sweep with the weapon in his front, its point seamed the breasts of the two astonished spearsmen, whose distance alone saved them from more serious injuries.

This rapid and unlooked-for execution struck the assailants with awe and dread. Never before had they witnessed the power of metal as used in war; and the sudden amputation of the arm struck them as something miraculous. Even the ferocious Carib fell back in dismay, and Luis felt hopes of victory. This was the first occasion on which the Spaniards had come to blows with the mild inhabitants of the islands they had discovered, though it is usual with the historians to refer to an incident of still later occurrence, as the commencement of strife, the severe privacy which has ever been thrown over the connexion of Don Luis with the expedition, having completely baffled their slight and superficial researches. Of course, the efficiency of a weapon like that used by our hero, was as novel to the Haytians as it was terrific.

At this instant a shout among the assailants, and the appearance of a fresh body of the invaders, with a tall and commanding chief at their head, announced the arrival of Caonabo in person. This warlike cacique was soon made acquainted with the state of affairs, and it was evident that the prowess of our hero struck him as much with admiration as with wonder. After a few minutes, he directed his followers to fall back to a greater distance, and, laying aside his club, he advanced fearlessly towards Luis, making signs of amity.

When the two adversaries met, it was with mutual respect and confidence. The Carib made a short and vehement speech, in which the only word that was intelligible to our hero, was the name of the beautiful young Indian. By this time Ozema had also advanced, as if eager to speak, and her rude suitor turned to her, with an appeal that was passionate, if not eloquent. He laid his hand frequently on his heart, and his voice became soft and persuasive. Ozema replied earnestly, and in the quick manner of one whose resolution was settled. At the close of her speech, the colour mounted to the temples of the ardent girl, and, as

if purposely to make her meaning understood by our hero, she ended by saying, in Spanish,

"Caonabo — no — no — no! — Luis — Luis!"

The aspect of the hurricane of the tropics is not darker, or more menacing, than the scowl with which the Carib chief heard this unequivocal rejection of his suit, accompanied, as it was, by so plain a demonstration in favour of the stranger. Waving his hand in defiance, he strode back to his people, and issued orders for a fresh assault.

This time, a tempest of arrows preceded the rush, and Luis was fain to seek his former cover behind the rocks. Indeed, this was the only manner in which he could save the life of Ozema; the devoted girl resolutely persevering in standing before his body, in the hope it would shield him from his enemies. There had been some words of reproach from Caonabo to the Carib chief, who had retreated from the first attack, and the air was yet filled with arrows, as this man rushed forward, singly, to redeem his name. Luis met him, firm as the rock behind him. The shock was violent, and the blow that fell on the buckler would have crushed an arm less enured to such rude encounters; but it glanced obliquely from the shield, and the club struck the earth with the weight of a beetle. Our hero saw that all now depended on a deep impression. His sword flashed in the bright sun, and the head of the Carib tumbled by the side of his club, actually leaving the body erect for an instant, so keen was the weapon, and so dexterous had been the blow.

Twenty savages were on the spring, but they stopped, like men transfixed, at this unexpected sight. Caonabo, however, undaunted even when most surprised, roared out his orders like a maddened bull, and the wavering crowd was again about to advance, when the loud report of an arquebuse was heard, followed by the whistling of its deadly missives. A second Haytian fell dead in his tracks. It exceeded the powers of savage endurance to resist this assault, which, to their uninstructed minds, appeared to come from heaven. In two minutes, neither Caonabo nor any of his followers were visible. As they rushed down the hill, Sancho appeared from a cover, carrying the arquebuse, which he had taken the precaution to reload.

The circumstances did not admit of delay. Not a being of Mattinao's tribe was to be seen in any direction; and Luis made no doubt they had all fled. Determined to savé Ozema at every hazard, he now took his way to the river, in order to escape in one of the canoes. In passing through the town, it was seen that not a house had been plundered; and the circumstance was commented on by the Spaniards, Luis pointing it out to his companion.

"Caonabo—no—no—no—Ozema!—Ozema!" was the answer of the girl, who well knew the real object of the inroad.

A dozen canoes lay at the landing, and five minutes sufficed for the fugitives to enter one, and to commence their retreat. The current flowed towards the sea, and in a couple of hours they were on the ocean. As the wind blew constantly from the eastward, Sancho soon rigged an apology for a sail, and, an hour before the sun set, the party landed on a point that concealed them from the bay; Luis being mindful of the admiral's injunction, to conceal his excursion, lest others might claim a similar favour.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Three-score and ten I can remember well,
Within the volume of which time I have seen
Hours dreadful, and things strange, but this sore sight
Hath trifled former knowings."

Macbeth.

A SIGHT that struck our hero with a terror and awe, almost as great as those experienced by the ignorant Haytians at the report and effect of the arquebuse, awaited him, as he came in view of the anchorage. The Santa Maria, that vessel of the admiral, which he had left only four days before in her gallant array and pride, lay a stranded wreck on the sands, with fallen masts, broken sides, and all the other signs of nautical destruction. The Niña was anchored in safety, it is true, at no great distance, but a sense of loneliness and desertion came over the young man, as

he gazed at this small craft, which was little more than a felucca, raised to the rank of a ship for the purposes of the voyage. The beach was covered with stores, and it was evident that the Spaniards and the people of Guacanagari toiled in company, at the construction of a sort of fortress; an omen that some great change had come over the expedition. Ozema was immediately left in the house of a native, and the two adventurers hurried forward to join their friends, and to ask an explanation of what they had seen.

Columbus received his young friend kindly, but in deep affliction. The manner in which the ship was lost has been often told, and Luis learned that, the Niña being too small to carry all away, a colony was to be left in the fortress, while the remainder of the adventurers hastened back to Spain. Guacanagari had shown himself full of sympathy, and was kindness itself, while every one had been too much occupied with the shipwreck to miss our hero, or to hearken to rumours of an event as common as an inroad from a Carib chief, to carry off an Indian beauty. Perhaps the latter event was still too recent to have reached the shore.

The week that succeeded the return of Luis, was one of active exertion. The Santa Maria was wrecked on the morning of Christmas day, 1492, and on that of the 4th of January following, the Niña was ready to depart on her return voyage. During this interval, Luis had seen Ozema but once, and then he had found her sorrowing, mute, and resembling a withered flower, that retained its beauty even while it drooped. On the evening of the third, however, while lingering near the new-finished fortress, he was summoned by Sancho to another interview. To the surprise of our hero, he found the young cacique with his sister.

Although language was wanting, on this occasion, the parties easily understood each other. Ozema was no longer sorrowful, and borne down with grief: the smile and the laugh came easily from her young and buoyant spirits, and Luis thought he had never seen her so winning and lovely. She had arranged her scanty toilet with Indian coquetry, and the bright warm colour of her cheeks added new lustre to her brilliant eyes. Her light, agile form, a model of artless grace, seemed so ethereal as

scarce to touch the earth. The secret of this sudden change was not long hid from Luis. The brother and sister, after discussing all their dangers and escapes, and passing in review the character and known determination of Caonabo, had come to the conclusion that there was no refuge for Ozema but in flight. What most determined the brother to consent that his sister should accompany the strangers to their distant home, it would be useless to inquire; but the motive of Ozema herself, can be no secret to the reader. It was known that the admiral was desirous of carrying to Spain a party of natives; and three females, one of whom was of Ozema's rank, had already consented to go. This chieftain's wife was not only known to Ozema, but she was a kinswoman. Every thing seemed propitious to the undertaking; and as a voyage to Spain was still a mystery to the natives, who regarded it as something like an extended passage from one of their islands to another, no formidable difficulties presented themselves to the imagination of either the cacique or his sister.

This proposition took our hero by surprise. He was both flattered and pleased at the self-devotion of Ozema, even while it troubled him. Perhaps there were moments when he a little distrusted himself. Still Mercedes reigned in his heart, and he shook off the feeling as a suspicion that a true knight could not entertain without offering an insult to his own honour. On second thoughts, there were fewer objections to the scheme than he had at first fancied; and, after an hour's discussion, he left the place to go and consult the admiral.

Columbus was still at the fortress, and he heard our hero gravely and with interest. Once or twice Luis's eyes dropped under the searching glance of his superior; but, on the whole, he acquitted himself of the task he had undertaken, with credit.

"The sister of a cacique, thou say'st, Don Luis," returned the admiral, thoughtfully. "The virgin sister of a cacique?"

"Even so, Don Christopher; and of a grace, birth, and beauty, that will give our Lady, the Queen, a most exalted idea of the merits of our discovery."

"Thou wilt remember, Señor Conde, that nought but

purity may be offered to purity. Doña Isabella is a model for all queens, and mothers, and wives; and I trust nothing to offend her angelic mind can ever come from her favoured servants. There has been no deception practised on this wild girl, to lead her into sin and misery?"

"Don Christopher, you can scarce think this of me. Doña Mercedes herself is not more innocent than the girl I mean, nor could her brother feel more solicitude in her fortunes, than I feel. When the king and queen have satisfied their curiosity, and dismissed her, I propose to place her under the care of the Lady of Valverde."

"The rarer the specimens that we take, the better, Luis. This will gratify the sovereigns, and cause them to think favourably of our discoveries, as thou sayest. It might be done without inconvenience. The Niña is small, of a verity, but we gain much in leaving this large party behind us. I have given up the principal cabin to the other females, since thou and I can fare rudely for a few weeks. Let the girl come, and see thou to her comfort and convenience."

This settled the matter. Early next morning Ozema embarked, carrying with her the simple wealth of an Indian princess, among which the turban was carefully preserved. Her relative had an attendant, who sufficed for both. Luis paid great attention to the accommodations, in which both comfort and privacy were duly respected. The parting with Mattinao was touchingly tender, for the domestic affections appear to have been much cultivated among these simple-minded and gentle people; but the separation, it was supposed, would be short, and Ozema had, again and again, assured her brother that her repugnance to Caonabo, powerful cacique as he might be, was unconquerable. Each hour increased it, strengthening her resolution never to become his wife. The alternative was to secrete herself in the island, or to make this voyage to Spain; and there was glory as well as security in the latter. With this consolation the brother and sister parted.

Columbus had intended to push his discoveries much farther, before he returned to Europe; but the loss of the Santa Maria, and the desertion of the Pinta, reduced him to the necessity of bringing the expedition to a close, lest,

by some untoward accident, all that had actually been achieved should be for ever lost to the world. Accordingly, in the course of the 4th of January, 1493, he made sail to the eastward, holding his course along the shores of Hayti. His great object now was to get back to Spain before his remaining little bark should fail him, when his own name would perish with the knowledge of his discoveries. Fortunately, however, on the 6th, the Pinta was seen coming down before the wind, Martin Alonzo Pinzon having effected one of the purposes for which he had parted company, that of securing a quantity of gold, but failed in discovering any mines, which is believed to have been his principal motive.

It is not important to the narrative to relate the details of the meeting that followed. Columbus received the offending Pinzon with prudent reserve, and, hearing his explanations, he directed him to prepare the Pinta for the return passage. After wooding and watering accordingly, in a bay favourable to such objects, the two vessels proceeded to the eastward in company; still following the north shore of Hayti, Española, or Little Spain, as the island had been named by Columbus.*

It was the 16th of the month, ere the adventurers finally took their leave of this beautiful spot. They had scarcely got clear of the land, steering a north-easterly course, when the favourable winds deserted them, and they were again

* The fortunes of this beautiful island furnish a remarkable proof of the manner in which abuses are made, by the providence of God, to produce their own punishments. This island, which is about two-thirds the size of the state of New York, was the seat of Spanish authority, in the New World, for many years. The mild aborigines, who were numerous and happy when discovered, were literally exterminated by the cruelties of their new masters; and it was found necessary to import negroes from Africa, to toil in the cane-fields. Towards the middle of the sixteenth century, it is said that two hundred of the aborigines were not to be found in the island, although Ovando had decoyed no less than forty thousand from the Bahamas, to supply the places of the dead, as early as 1513! At a later day, Española passed into the hands of the French, and all know the terrible events by which it has gone into the exclusive possession of the descendants of the children of Africa. All that has been said of the influence of the white population of this country, as connected with our own Indians, sinks into insignificance, as compared with these astounding facts.

met by the trades. The weather was moderate, however, and by keeping the two vessels on the best tack, by the 10th of February, the admiral, making sundry deviations from a straight course, however, had stretched across the track of ocean in which these constant breezes prevailed, and reached a parallel of latitude as high as Palos, his port. In making this long slant, the Niña, contrary to former experience, was much detained by the dull sailing of the Pinta, which vessel, having sprung her after-mast, was unable to bear a press of sail. The light breezes also favoured the first, which had ever been deemed a fast craft, in smooth water and gentle gales.

Most of the phenomena of the outward passage were observed on the homeward; but the tunny-fish no longer excited hopes, nor did the sea-weed awaken fears. These familiar objects were successfully, but slowly passed, and the variable winds were happily struck again in the first fortnight. Here the traverses necessarily became more and more complicated, until the pilots, unused to so long and difficult a navigation, in which they received no aids from either land or water, got confused in their reckonings, disputing hotly among themselves concerning their true position.

"Thou hast heard to-day, Luis," said the admiral smiling, in one of his renewed conferences with our hero, "the contentions of Vicente Yañez, with his brother, Martin Alonzo, and the other pilots, touching our distance from Spain. These constant shifts of wind have perplexed the honest mariners, and they fancy themselves in any part of the Atlantic, but that in which they really are!"

"Much depends on you, Señor; not only our safety, but the knowledge of our great discoveries."

"Thou sayest true, Don Luis. Vicente Yañez, Sancho Ruiz, Pedro Alonzo Niño, and Bartolemeo Roldan, to say nothing of the profound calculators in the Pinta, place the vessels in the neighbourhood of Madeira, which is nearer to Spain, by a hundred and fifty leagues, than the truth would show. These honest people have followed their wishes, rather than their knowledge of the ocean and the heavens."

"And you, Don Christopher, where do you place the caravels, since there is no motive to conceal the truth?"

"We are south of Flores, young count, fully twelve degrees west of the Canaries, and in the latitude of Nafé, in Africa. But I would that they should be bewildered, until the right of possession to our discoveries be made a matter of certainty. Not one of these men now doubts his ability to do all I have done, and yet neither is able to grope his way back again, after crossing this track of water to Asia!"

Luis understood the admiral, and the size of the vessels rendering the communication of secrets hazardous, the conversation changed.

Up to this time, though the winds were often variable, the weather had been good. A few squalls had occurred, as commonly happens at sea, but they had proved to be neither long nor severe. All this was extremely grateful to Columbus, who, now he had effected the great purpose for which he might have been said to live, felt some such concern lest the important secret should be lost to the rest of mankind, as one who carries a precious object through scenes of danger experiences for the safety of his charge. A change, however, was at hand, and at the very moment when the great navigator began to hope the best, he was fated to experience the severest of all his trials.

As the vessels advanced north, the weather became cooler, as a matter of course, and the winds stronger. During the night of the 11th of February, the caravels made a great run on their course, gaining more than a hundred miles between sunset and sunrise. The next morning many birds were in sight, from which fact Columbus believed himself quite near the Azores, while the pilots fancied they were in the immediate vicinity of Madeira. The following day the wind was less favourable, though strong, and a heavy sea had got up. The properties of the little Niña now showed themselves to advantage, for, ere the turn of the day, she had to contend with such a struggle of the elements, as few in her had ever before witnessed. Fortunately, all that consummate seamanship could devise to render her safe and comfortable had been done, and she was in as perfect a state of preparation for a tempest, as circumstances would allow. The only essential defect was her unusual lightness, since, most of her stores as well as her water being nearly exhausted, her draught of

water was materially less than it should have been. The caravel was so small, that this circumstance, which is of little consequence to the safety of large vessels, got to be one of consideration in a craft whose means of endurance did not place her above the perils of squalls. The reader will understand the distinction better when he is told that ships of size can only lose their spars by sudden gusts of wind, seldom being thrown on their beam-ends, as it is termed, unless by the power of the waves; whereas, smaller craft incur the risk of being capsized, when the spread of their canvass is disproportioned to their stability. Although the seamen of the Niña perceived this defect in their caravel, which, in a great measure, proceeded from the consumption of the fresh water, they hoped so soon to gain a haven, that no means had been taken to remedy the evil.

Such was the state of things, as the sun set on the night of the 12th of February, 1493. As usual, Columbus was on the poop, vessels of all sizes then carrying these clumsy excrescences, though this of the Niña was so small as scarce to deserve the name. Luis was at his side, and both watched the aspect of the heavens and the ocean in grave silence. Never before had our hero seen the elements in so great commotion, and the admiral had just remarked, that even he had not viewed many nights as threatening. There is a solemnity about a sunset at sea, when the clouds appear threatening, and the omens of a storm are brooding, that is never to be met with on the land. The loneliness of a ship, struggling through a waste of dreary-looking water, contributes to the influence of the feelings that are awakened, as there appears to be but one object on which the wild efforts of the storm can expend themselves. All else seem to be in unison to aid the general strife; ocean, heavens, and the air, being alike accessaries in the murky picture. When the wintry frowns of February are thrown around all, the gloomy hues of the scene are deepened to their darkest tints.

"This is a brooding night-fall, Don Luis," Columbus remarked, just as the last rays that the sun cast upwards on the stormy-looking clouds disappeared from their ragged outlines—"I have rarely seen another as menacing."

"One has a double confidence in the care of God, while

sailing under your guidance, Señor; first in his goodness, and next in the knowledge of his agent's skilfulness."

"The power of the Almighty is sufficient to endue the feeblest mortal with all fitting skill, when it is his divine will to spare; or to rob the most experienced of their knowledge, when his anger can only be appeased by the worldly destruction of his creatures."

"You look upon the night as portentous, Don Christopher!"

"I *have* seen omens as ill, though very seldom. Had not the caravel this burthensome freight, I might view our situation less anxiously."

"You surprise me, sir admiral! the pilots have regretted that our barque is so light."

"True, as to material substance; but it beareth a cargo of knowledge, Luis, that it would be grievous to see wasted on these vacant waters. Dost thou not perceive how fast and gloomily the curtain of night gathereth about us, and the manner in which the Niña is rapidly getting to be our whole world? Even the Pinta is barely distinguishable, like a shapeless shadow on the foaming billows, serving rather as a beacon to warn us of our own desolation, than as a consort to cheer us with her presence and companionship."

"I have never known you thus moody, excellent Señor, on account of the aspect of the weather!"

"'Tis not usual with me, young lord; but my heart is loaded with its glorious secret. Behold!—dost thou remark that further sign of the warring of the elements?"

The admiral, as he spoke, was standing with his face towards Spain, while his companion's gaze was fastened on the portentous-looking horizon of the west, around which still lingered sufficient light to render its frowns as chilling as they were visible. He had not seen the change that drew the remark from Columbus, but, turning quickly, he asked an explanation. Notwithstanding the season, the horizon at the north-east had been suddenly illuminated by a flash of lightning, and even while the admiral was relating the fact, and pointing out the quarter of the heavens in which the phenomenon had appeared, two more flashes followed each other in quick succession.

"Señor Vicente"—called out Columbus, leaning forward in a way to overlook a group of dusky figures that was collected on the half-deck beneath him—"Is Señor Vicente Yañez of your number?"

"I am here, Don Christopher, and note the omen. It is the sign of even more wind."

"We shall be visited with a tempest, worthy Vicente, and it will come from that quarter of the heavens, or its opposite. Have we made all sure in the caravel?"

"I know not what else is to be done, Señor Almirante. Our canvass is at the lowest, everything is well lashed, and we carry as little aloft as can be spared. Sancho Ruiz, look you to the tarpaulins, lest we ship more water than will be safe."

"Look well to our light, too, that our consort may not part from us in the darkness. This is no time for sleep, Vicente—place your most trusty men at the tiller."

"Señor, they are selected with care. Sancho Mundo, and young Pepe of Moguer, do that duty, at present; others as skilled await to relieve them, when their watch ends."

"'Tis well, good Pinzon—neither you nor I can close an eye to-night."

The precautions of Columbus were not uncalled for. About an hour after the unnatural flashes of lightning had been seen, the wind rose from the south-west, favourably as to direction, but fearfully as to force. Notwithstanding his strong desire to reach port, the admiral found it prudent to order the solitary sail that was set, to be taken in; and most of the night the two caravels drove before the gale, under bare poles, heading to the north-east. We say both, for Martin Alonzo, practised as he was in stormy seas, and disposed as he was to act only for himself, now the great problem was solved, kept the Pinta so near the Niña, that few minutes passed without her being seen careering on the summit of a foaming sea, or settling bodily into the troughs, as she drove headlong before the tempest; keeping side by side with her consort, however, as man clings to man in moments of dependency and peril.

Thus passed the night of the 13th, the day bringing with it a more vivid picture of the whole scene, though it was thought that the wind somewhat abated in its force as

the sun arose. Perhaps this change existed only in the imaginations of the mariners, the light usually lessening the appearance of danger, by enabling men to face it. Each caravel, however, set a little canvass, and both went foaming ahead, hurrying towards Spain with their unlooked-for tidings. As the day advanced, the fury of the gale sensibly lessened; but as night drew on again, it returned with renewed force, more adverse, and compelling the adventurers to take in every rag of sail they had ventured to spread. Nor was this the worst. The caravels, by this time, had driven up into a tract of ocean where a heavy cross-sea was raging, the effects of some other gale that had recently blown from a different quarter. Both vessels struggled manfully to lay up to their course, under these adverse circumstances; but they began to labour in a way to excite uneasiness in those who comprehended the fullest powers of the machines, and who knew whence the real sources of danger were derived. As night approached, Columbus perceived that the Pinta could not maintain her ground, the strain on her after-mast proving too severe to be borne, even without an inch of canvass spread. Reluctantly did he order the Niña to edge away towards her consort, separation, at such a moment, being the evil next to positive destruction.

In this manner the night of the 14th drew around our lone and sea-girt adventurers. What had been merely menace and omens the previous night, were now a dread reality. Columbus, himself, declared he had never known a barque to buffet a more furious tempest, nor did he affect to conceal from Luis the extent of his apprehensions. With the pilots, and before the crew, he was serene and even cheerful; but when alone with our hero, he became frank and humble. Still was the celebrated navigator always calm and firm. No unmanly complaint escaped him, though his very soul was saddened at the danger his great discoveries ran of being for ever lost.

Such was the state of feeling that prevailed with the admiral, as he sat in his narrow cabin, in the first hours of that appalling night, watching for any change, relieving or disastrous, that might occur. The howling of the winds, which fairly scooped up from the surface of the

raging Atlantic, the brine in sheets, was barely audible amid the roar and rush of the waters. At times, indeed, when the caravel sunk helplessly between two huge waves, the fragment of sail she still carried, would flap, and the air seemed hushed and still; and then, again, as the buoyant machine struggled upward, like a drowning man who gains the surface by frantic efforts, it would seem as if the columns of air were about to bear her off before them, as lightly as the driving spray. Even Luis, albeit little apt to take alarm, felt that their situation was critical, and his constitutional buoyancy of spirits had settled down in a thoughtful gravity, that was unusual with him. Had a column of a thousand hostile Moors stood before our hero, he would have thought rather of the means of overturning it than of escape; but this warring of the elements admitted of no such relief. It appeared actually like contending with the Almighty. In such scenes, indeed, the bravest find no means of falling back on their resolution and intrepidity; for the efforts of man seem insignificant and bootless as opposed to the will and power of God.

"'T is a wild night, Señor," our hero observed calmly, preserving an exterior of more unconcern than he really felt. "To me this surpasseth all I have yet witnessed of the fury of a tempest."

Columbus sighed heavily; then he removed his hands from his face, and glanced about him, as if in search of the implements he wanted.

"Count of Llera," he answered, with dignity, "there remaineth a solemn duty to perform. There is parchment in the draw on your side of this table, and here are the instruments for writing. Let us acquit ourselves of this important trust while time is yet mercifully given us, God alone knowing how long we have to live."

Luis did not blanch at these portentous words, but he looked earnest and grave. Opening the draw, he took out the parchment and laid it upon the table. The admiral now seized a pen, beckoning to his companion to take another, and both commenced writing as well as the incessant motion of the light caravel would allow. The task was arduous, but it was clearly executed. As Columbus wrote a sentence, he repeated it to Luis, who copied it word for

word, on his own piece of parchment. The substance of this record was the fact of the discoveries made, the latitude and longitude of Española, with the relative positions of the other islands, and a brief account of what he had seen. The letter was directed to Ferdinand and Isabella. As soon as each had completed his account, the admiral carefully enveloped his missive in a covering of waxed cloth, Luis imitating him in all things. Each then took a large cake of wax, and scooping a hole in it, the packet was carefully secured in the interior, when it was covered with the substance that had been removed. Columbus now sent for the cooper of the vessel, who was directed to inclose each cake in a separate barrel. These vessels abound in ships; and ere many minutes, the two letters were securely inclosed in the empty casks. Each taking a barrel, the admiral and our hero now appeared again on the half-deck. So terrific was the night, that no one slept, and most of the people of the Niña, men as well as officers, were crowded together on the gratings near the main-mast, where alone, with the exception of the still more privileged places, they considered themselves safe from being swept overboard. Indeed, even here they were constantly covered with the wash of the sea, the poop itself not being protected from rude visits of this nature.

As soon as the admiral was seen again, his followers crowded round him, solicitous to hear his opinion, and anxious to learn his present object. To have told the truth, would have been to introduce despair where hope had already nearly ceased; and, merely intimating that he performed a religious vow, Columbus, with his own hands, cast his barrel into the hissing ocean. That of Luis was placed upon the poop, in the expectation that it would float, should the caravel sink.

Three centuries and a half have rolled by, since Columbus took this wise precaution, and no tidings have ever been obtained of that cask. Its buoyancy was such that it might continue to float for ages. Covered with barnacles, it may still be drifting about the waste of waters, pregnant with its mighty revelations. It is possible, it may have been repeatedly rolled upon some sandy beach, and as frequently swept off again; and it may have been passed un-

heeded, on a thousand occasions, by different vessels, confounded with its vulgar fellows that are so often seen drifting about the ocean. Had it been found, it would have been opened; and had it been opened by any civilized man, it is next to impossible that an occurrence of so much interest should have been totally lost.

This duty discharged, the admiral had leisure to look about him. The darkness was now so great, that, but for the little light that was disengaged from the troubled water, it would have been difficult to distinguish objects at the length of the caravel. No one, who has merely been at sea in a tall ship, can form any just idea of the situation of the Niña. This vessel, little more than a large felucca, had actually sailed from Spain with the latine rig, that is so common to the light coasters of southern Europe; a rig that had only been altered in the Canaries. As she floated in a bay, or a river, her height above the water could not have exceeded four or five feet, and now that she was struggling with a tempest, in a cross sea, and precisely in that part of the Atlantic where the rake of the winds is the widest, and the tumult of the water the greatest, it seemed as if she were merely some aquatic animal, that occasionally rose to the surface to breathe. There were moments when the caravel appeared to be irretrievably sinking into the abyss of the ocean; huge black mounds of water rising around her in all directions, the confusion in the waves having destroyed all the ordinary symmetry of the rolling billows. Although so much figurative language has been used, in speaking of mountainous waves, it would not be exceeding the literal truth to add, that the Niña's yards were often below the summits of the adjacent seas, which were tossed upward in so precipitous a manner, as to create a constant apprehension of their falling in cataracts on her gratings; for, midship-deck, strictly speaking, she had none. This, indeed, formed the great source of danger; since one falling wave might have filled the little vessel, and carried her, with all in her, hopelessly to the bottom. As it was, the crests of seas were constantly tumbling inboard, or shooting athwart the hull of the caravel, in sheets of glittering foam, though happily never with sufficient power to overwhelm the buoyant fabric. At such perilous instants,

the safety of the craft depended on the frail tarpawlings. Had these light coverings given way, two or three successive waves would infallibly have so far filled the hold, as to render the hull water-logged; when the loss of the vessel would have followed as an inevitable consequence.

The admiral had ordered Vicente Yañez to carry the forcsail close reefed, in the hope of dragging the caravel through this chaos of waters, to a part of the ocean where the waves ran more regularly. The general direction of the seas too, so far as they could be said to have a general direction at all, had been respected, and the Niña had struggled onward — it might be better to say waded onward — some five or six leagues, since the disappearance of the day, and found no change. It was getting to be near midnight, and still the surface of the ocean presented the same wild aspect of chaotic confusion. Vicente Yañez approached the admiral, and declared that the barque could no longer bear the rag of sail she carried.

".The jerk, as we rise on the sea, goes near to pull the stern out of the craft," he said, "and the backward flap, as we settle into the troughs, is almost as menacing. The Niña will bear the canvass no longer, with safety."

"Who has seen aught of Martin Alonzo within the hour?" demanded Columbus, looking anxiously in the direction in which the Pinta ought to be visible. "Thou hast lowered the lantern, Vicente Yañez."

"It would stand the hurricane no longer. From time to time it hath been shown, and each signal hath been answered by my brother."

"Let it be shown once more. This is a moment when the presence of a friend gladdens the soul, even though he be helpless as ourselves."

The lantern was hoisted, and, after a steady gaze, a faint and distant light was seen glimmering in the rack of the tempest. The experiment was repeated, at short intervals, and as often was the signal answered, at increasing distances, until the light of their consort was finally lost altogether.

"The Pinta's mast is too feeble to bear even its gear, in such a gale," observed Vicente Yañez; "and my brother

hath found it impossible to keep as near the wind as we have done. He goes off more to leeward."

"Let the foresail be secured," answered Columbus, "as thou sayest. Our feeble craft can no longer bear these violent surges."

Vicente Yañez now mustered a few of his ablest men, and went forward himself to see this order executed. At the same moment the helm was righted, and the caravel slowly fell off, until she got dead before the gale. The task of gathering in the canvass was comparatively easy, the yard being but a few feet above the deck, and little besides the clews being exposed. Still it required men of the firmest nerve and the readiest hands to venture aloft at such an instant. Sancho took one side of the mast and Pepe the other, both manifesting such qualities as mark the perfect seaman, only.

The caravel was now drifting at the mercy of the winds and waves, the term scudding being scarcely applicable to the motion of a vessel so low, and which was so perfectly sheltered from the action of the wind by the height of the billows. Had the latter possessed their ordinary regularity, the low vessel must have been pooped; but, in a measure, her exemption from this calamity was owing to an irregularity that was only the source of a new danger. Still, the Niña drove ahead, and that swiftly, though not with the velocity necessary to outstrip the chasing water, had the waves followed with their customary order and rapidity. The cross seas defeated this; wave meeting wave, actually sending those crests which otherwise would have rolled over in combing foam, upward in terrific *jets d'eau*.

This was the crisis of the danger. There was an hour when the caravel careered amid the chaotic darkness with a sort of headlong fury, not unfrequently dashing forward with her broadside to the sea, as if the impatient stern was bent on overtaking the stem, and exposing all to the extreme jeopardy of receiving a flood of water on the beam. This imminent risk was only averted by the activity of the man at the helm, where Sancho toiled with all his skill and energy, until the sweat rolled from his brow, as if exposed again to the sun of the tropics. At length the alarm became so great and general, that a common demand was

made to the admiral to promise the customary religious oblations. For this purpose, all but the men at the helm assembled aft, and preparations were made to cast lots for the penance.

"Ye are in the hands of God, my friends," said Columbus, "and it is meet that ye all confess your dependence on his goodness, placing your security on his blessings and favour alone. In this cap which ye see in the hands of the Señor de Muños, are the same number of peas that we are of persons. One of these peas bears the mark of the Holy Cross, and he who shall draw forth this blessed emblem, stands pledged to make a pilgrimage to Santa Maria de Guadalupe, bearing a waxen taper of five pounds weight. As the chiefest sinner amongst you, no less than as your admiral, the first trial shall be mine."

Here Columbus put his hand into the cap, and on drawing forth a pea, and holding it to the lantern, it was found to bear on its surface the mark he had mentioned.

"This is well, Señor," said one of the pilots; "but replace the pea, and let the chance be renewed for a still heavier penance, and that at a shrine which is most in request with all good Christians; I mean that of our Lady of Loretto. One pilgrimage to that shrine is worth two to any other."

In moments of emergency the religious sentiment is apt to be strong; and this proposition was seconded with warmth. The admiral cheerfully consented; and when all had drawn, the marked pea was found in the hands of a common seaman, of the name of Pedro de Villa; one who bore no very good name for either piety or knowledge.

"'T is a weary and costly journey," grumbled the chosen penitent, "and cannot cheaply be made."

"Heed it not, friend Pedro," answered Columbus: "the bodily pains shall limit thy sufferings, for the cost of the journey shall be mine. This night groweth more and more terrific, good Bartolemeo Roldan."

"That doth it, Señor Admiral, and I am little content with such a pilgrim as Pedro here, although it may seem as if heaven itself directed the choice. A mass in Santa Clara de Moguer, with a watcher all night in that chapel,

will be of more account than your distant journeys made by such an one as he."

This opinion wanted not for supporters among the seamen of Moguer, and a third trial was made to determine the person. Again the pea was withdrawn from the cap by the admiral. Still the danger did not diminish, the caravel actually threatening to roll over amid the turbulence of the waves.

"We are too light, Vicente Yañez," said Columbus, "and desperate as the undertaking seemeth, we must make an effort to fill our empty casks with sea-water. Let hose be carefully introduced beneath the tarpawlings, and send careful hands below to make sure that the water do not get into the hold instead of the casks."

This order was obeyed, and several hours passed in efforts to execute this duty. The great difficulty was in protecting the men who raised the water from the sea, for while the whole element was raging in such confusion around them, it was no easy matter to secure a single drop in a useful manner. Patience and perseverance, however, prevailed in the end, and, ere the light returned, so many empty casks had been filled, as evidently to aid the steadiness of the vessel. Towards morning it rained in torrents, and the wind shifted from south to west, losing but little of its force, however. At this juncture the foresail was again got on the barque, and she was dragged by it, through a tremendous sea, a few miles to the eastward.

When the day dawned, the scene was changed for the better. The Pinta was nowhere to be seen, and most in the Niña believed she had gone to the bottom. But the clouds had opened a little, and a sort of mystical brightness rested on the ocean, which was white with foam, and still hissing with fury. The waves, however, were gradually getting to be more regular, and the seamen no longer found it necessary to lash themselves to the vessel, in order to prevent being washed overboard. Additional sail was got on the caravel, and as her motion ahead increased, she became steadier, and more certain in all her movements.

CHAPTER IX.

"For now, from sight of land diverted clear,
They drove uncertain o'er the pathless deep;
Nor gave the adverse gale due course to steer,
Nor durst they the design'd direction keep:
The gathering tempest quickly raged so high,
The wave-encompass'd boat but faintly reach'd my eye."
Vision of Patience.

Such was the state of things on the morning of the 15th, and shortly after the sun arose, the joyful cry of land was heard from aloft. It is worthy of being mentioned that this land was made directly ahead, so accurate were all the admiral's calculations, and so certain did he feel of his position on the chart. A dozen opinions, however, prevailed among the pilots and people concerning this welcome sight; some fancying it the continent of Europe, while others believed it to be Madeira. Columbus, himself, publicly announced it to be one of the Azores.

Each hour was lessening the distance between this welcome spot of earth and the adventurers, when the gale chopped directly round, bringing the island dead to windward. Throughout a long and weary day the little barque kept turning up against the storm, in order to reach this much desired haven, but the heaviness of the swell and the foul wind made their progress both slow and painful. The sun set in wintry gloom again, and the land still lay in the wrong quarter, and apparently at a distance that was unattainable. Hour after hour passed, and still in the darkness the Niña was struggling to get nearer to the spot where the land had been seen. Columbus never left his post throughout all these anxious scenes, for to him it seemed as if the fortunes of his discoveries were now suspended, as it might be, by a hair. Our hero was less watchful, but even he began to feel more anxiety in the result, as the moment approached when the fate of the expedition was to be decided.

As the sun arose every eye turned inquiringly around the watery view, and, to the common disappointment, no

land was visible. Some fancied all had been illusion, but the admiral believed they had passed the island in the darkness, and he hove about, with a view to stand farther south. This change in the course had not been made more than an hour or two, when land was again dimly seen astern, and in a quarter where it could not have been previously perceived. For this island the caravel tacked, and until dark she was beating up for it, against a strong gale and a heavy sea. Night again drew around her, and the land once more vanished in the gloom.

At the usual hour of the previous night, the people of the Niña had assembled to chant the *salve fac, regina*, or the evening hymn to the Virgin, for it is one of the touching incidents of this extraordinary voyage, that these rude sailors first carried with them into the unknown wastes of the Atlantic the songs of their religion, and the Christian's prayers. While thus employed, a light had been made to leeward, which was supposed to be on the island first seen, thus encouraging the admiral in his belief that he was in the centre of a group, and that by keeping well to windward, he would certainly find himself in a situation to reach a port in the morning. That morning, however, had produced no other change than the one noted, and he was now preparing to pass another night, or that of the 17th, in uncertainty, when the cry of land ahead suddenly cheered the spirits of all in the vessel.

The Niña stood boldly in, and before midnight she was near enough to the shore to let go an anchor; so heavy were both wind and sea, however, that the cable parted, thus rejecting them, as it were, from the regions to which they properly belonged. Sail was made, and the effort to get to windward renewed, and by daylight the caravel was enabled to run in and get an anchorage on the north side of the island. Here the wearied and almost exhausted mariners learned that Columbus was right, as usual, and that they had reached the island of St. Mary, one of the Azores.

It does not belong to this tale to record all the incidents that occurred while the Niña lay at this port. They embraced an attempt to seize the caravel, on the part of the Portuguese, who, as they had been the last to harass the admiral on his departure from the old world, were the first

to beset him on his return. All their machinations failed, however, and after having the best portion of his crew in their power, and actually having once sailed from the island without the men, the admiral finally arranged the matter, and took his departure for Spain, with all his people on board, on the 24th of the month.

Providence seemed to favour the passage of the adventurers, for the first few days; the wind being favourable and the sea smooth. Between the morning of the 24th and the evening of the 26th, the caravel had made nearly a hundred leagues directly on her course to Palos, when she was met by a foul wind and another heavy sea. The gale now became violent again, though sufficiently favourable to allow them to steer east, a little northerly, occasionally hauling more ahead. The weather was rough, but as the admiral knew he was drawing in with the continent of Europe, he did not complain, cheering his people with the hopes of a speedy arrival. In this manner the time passed until the turn of the day, Saturday, March 2d, when Columbus believed himself to be within a hundred miles of the coast of Portugal, the long continuance of the scant southerly winds having set him thus far north.

The night commenced favourably, the caravel struggling ahead through a tremendous sea that was sweeping down from the south, having the wind abeam, blowing so fresh, as to cause the sails to be reduced within manageable size. The Niña was an excellent craft, as had been thoroughly proved, and she was now steadier than when first assailed by the tempests, her pilots having filled still more of the casks, than they had been able to do during the late storm.

"Thou hast lived at the helm, Sancho Mundo, since the late gales commenced," said the admiral cheerfully, as, about the last hour of the first watch, he passed near the post of the old mariner. "It is no small honour to hold that station in the cruel gales we have been fated to endure."

"I so consider it, Señor Don Almirante; and I hope their illustrious and most excellent Highnesses, the two Sovereigns, will look upon it with the same eyes, so far as the weight of the duty is concerned."

"And why not as respects the honour, friend Sancho?"

putain Luis, who had become a sworn friend of the seaman, since the rescue of the rocks.

"Honour, Señor Master Pedro, is cold food and sits ill on a poor man's stomach. One dobla is worth two dukedoms to such a man as I am, since the dobla would help to gain me respect, whereas the dukedoms would only draw down ridicule upon my head. No, no—Master Pedro, your worship, give me a pocket full of gold, and leave honours to such as have a fancy for them. If a man must be raised in the world, begin at the beginning, or lay a solid foundation; after which he may be made a knight of St. James, if the sovereigns have need of his name to make out their list."

"Thou art too garrulous for a helmsman, Sancho, though so excellent otherwise," observed the admiral, gravely. "Look to thy course; doblas will not be wanting, when the voyage is ended."

"Many thanks, Señor Almirante; and, as a proof that my eyes are not shut, even though the tongue wags, I will just desire your excellency, and the pilots, to study that rag of a cloud that is gathering up here, at the south-west, and ask yourselves if it means evil, or good."

"By the mass! the man is right, Don Christopher!" exclaimed Bartolemeo Roldan, who was standing near; "that is a most sinister-looking cloud, and is not unlike those that give birth to the white squalls of Africa."

"See to it—see to it—good Bartolemeo," returned Columbus, hastily. "We have, indeed, counted too much on our good fortune, and have culpably overlooked the aspect of the heavens. Let Vicente Yañez and all our people be called; we may have need of them."

Columbus now ascended to the poop, where he got a wider and a better view of the ocean and the skies. The signs were, indeed, as portentous as they had been sudden in their appearance. The atmosphere was filled with a white mist, that resembled a light smoke, and the admiral had barely time to look about him, when a roar that resembled the trampling of a thousand horse passing a bridge at full speed, came rushing down with the wind. The ocean was heard hissing, as is usual at such moments, and the tempest burst upon the little bark, as if envious demons

were determined she should never reach Spain, with the glorious tidings she bore.

A report like that of a heavy discharge of musketry, was the first signal that the squall had struck the Niña. It came from the rent canvass, every sail having given way at the same instant. The caravel heeled until the water reached her masts, and there was a breathless instant, when the oldest seaman feared that she would be forced over entirely upon her side. Had not the sails split, this calamity might truly have occurred. Sancho, too, had borne the tiller up in season, and when the Niña recovered from the shock, she almost flew out of the water, as she drove before the blast.

This was the commencement of a new gale, which even surpassed in violence that from which they had so recently escaped. For the first hour, awe and disappointment almost paralyzed the crew, as nothing was or could be done to relieve them from the peril they were in. The vessel was already scudding — the last resource of seamen —and even the rags of the canvass were torn, piece by piece, from the spars, sparing the men the efforts that would have been necessary to secure them. In this crisis, again the penitent people resorted to their religious rites; and again it fell to the lot of the admiral to make a visit to some favourite shrine. In addition, the whole crew made a vow to fast on bread and water, the first Saturday after they should arrive.

"It is remarkable, Don Christopher," said Luis, when the two were again alone on the poop, "it is remarkable that these lots should fall so often on you. Thrice have you been selected by Providence to be an instrument of thankfulness and penitence. — This cometh of your exceeding faith!"

"Say, rather, Luis, that it cometh of my exceeding sins. My pride, alone, should draw down upon me stronger rebukes than these. I fear me, I had forgotten that I was merely an agent chosen by God, to work his own great ends, and was falling into the snares of Satan, by fancying that I, of my own wisdom and philosophy, had done this great exploit, which cometh so truly of God."

"Do you believe us in danger, Señor?"

"Greater hazard besets us now, Don Luis, than hath befallen us since we left Palos. We are driving towards the continent, which cannot be thirty leagues distant; and, as thou seest, the ocean is becoming more troubled every hour. Happily, the night is far advanced, and with the light we may find the means of safety."

The day did re-appear as usual; for whatever disturbances occur on its surface, the earth continues its daily revolutions in the sublimity of its vastness, affording at each change to the mites on its surface, the indubitable proofs that an omnipotent power reigns over all its movements. The light, however, brought no change in the aspects of the ocean and sky. The wind blew furiously, and the Niña struggled along amid the chaos of waters, driving nearer and nearer to the continent that lay before her.

About the middle of the afternoon, signs of land became quite apparent, and no one doubted the vicinity of the vessel to the shores of Europe. Nevertheless, nought was visible but the raging ocean, the murky sky, and the sort of supernatural light with which the atmosphere is so often charged in a tempest. The spot where the sun set, though known by means of the compass, could not be traced by the eye; and again night closed on the wild, wintry scene, as if the little caravel was abandoned by hope as well as by the day. To add to the apprehensions of the people, a high cross sea was running; and, as ever happens with vessels so small, in such circumstances, tons' weight of water were constantly falling inboard, threatening destruction to the gratings and their frail coverings of tarred cloth.

"This is the most terrible night of all, son Luis," said Columbus, about an hour after the darkness had drawn around them. "If we escape this night, well may we deem ourselves favoured of God!"

"And yet you speak calmly, Señor; as calmly as if your heart was filled with hope."

"The seaman that cannot command his nerves and voice, even in the utmost peril, hath mistaken his calling. But I *feel* calm, Luis, as well as *seem* calm. God hath us in his keeping, and will do that which most advanceth his own

holy will. My boys—my two poor boys trouble me sorely; but even the fatherless are not forgotten!"

"If we perish, Señor, the Portuguese will remain masters of our secret: to them only is it now known, ourselves excepted, since, for Martin Alonzo, I should think, there is little hope."

"This is another source of grief; yet have I taken such steps as will probably put their highnesses on the maintenance of their rights. The rest must be trusted to heaven."

At that moment was heard the startling cry of "land." This word, which so lately would have been the cause of sudden bursts of joy, was now the source of new uneasiness. Although the night was dark, there were moments when the gloom opened, as it might be, for a mile or two around the vessel, and when objects as prominent as a coast could be seen with sufficient distinctness. Both Columbus and our hero hastened to the forward part of the caravel, at this cry, though even this common movement was perilous, in order to obtain the best possible view of the shore. It was, indeed, so near, that all on board heard, or fancied they heard, the roar of the surf against the rocks. That it was Portugal, none doubted, and, to stand on in the present uncertainty of their precise position, or without a haven to enter, would be inevitable destruction. There remained only the alternative to ware with the caravel's head off shore, and endeavour to keep an offing until morning. Columbus had no sooner mentioned this necessity, than Vicente Yañez set about its execution in the best manner circumstances would allow.

Hitherto the wind had been kept a little on the starboard quarter, the caravel steering east, a point or two north, and it was now the aim to lay her head so far round as to permit her to steer north, a point or two west. By the manner in which the coast appeared to trend, it was thought that this variation in the direction might keep them, for a few hours, at a sufficient distance from the shore. But this manœuvre could not be effected without the aid of canvass, and an order was issued to set the foresail. The first flap of the canvass, as it was loosened to the gale, was tremendous, the jerk threatening to tear the foremast from its step, and then all was still as death forward, the hull sinking so low

behind a barrier of water, as actually to becalm the sail. Sancho and his associate seized the favourable moment to secure the clews, and, as the little barque struggled upward again, the canvass filled with some such shock as is felt at the sudden checking of a cable. From this moment the Niña drew slowly off to sea again, though her path lay through such a scene of turbulent water, as threatened, at each instant, to overwhelm her.

"Luis!" said a soft voice, at our hero's elbow, as the latter stood clinging to the side of the door of the cabin appropriated to the females—"Luis—Hayti better—Mattinao better—much bad, Luis!"

It was Ozema, who had risen from her pallet to look out upon the appalling view of the ocean. During the mild weather of the first part of the passage, the intercourse between Luis and the natives on board, had been constant and cheerful. Though slightly incommoded by her situation, Ozema had always received his visits with guileless delight, and her progress in Spanish had been such as to astonish even her teacher. Nor were the means of communication confined altogether to the advance of Ozema, since Luis, in his endeavours to instruct her, had acquired nearly as many words of her native tongue, as he had taught her of his own. In this manner they conversed, resorting to both dialects for terms, as necessity dictated. We shall give a free translation of what was said, endeavouring, at the same time, to render the dialogue characteristic and graphic.

"Poor Ozema!" returned our hero, drawing her gently to a position where he could support her against the effects of the violent motion of the caravel—"thou must regret Hayti, indeed, and the peaceful security of thy groves!"

"Caonabo there, Luis."

"True, innocent girl; but even Caonabo is not as terrible as this anger of the elements."

"No—no—no—Caonabo much bad. Break Ozema's heart. No Caonabo—no Hayti."

"Thy dread of the Carib chief, dear Ozema, hath upset thy reason, in part. Thou hast a God, as well as we Christians, and, like us, must put thy trust in him; he alone can now protect thee."

"What protect?"

"Care for thee, Ozema. See that thou dost not come to harm. Look to thy safety and welfare."

"Luis protect Ozema. So promise Mattinao—so promise Ozema—so promise heart."

"Dear girl, so will I, to the extent of my means. But what can I do against this tempest?"

"What Luis do against Caonabo?—kill him—cut Indians —make him run away!"

"This was easy to a Christian knight, who carried a good sword and buckler, but it is impossible against a tempest. We have only one hope, and that is to trust in the Spaniard's God."

"Spaniards great—have great God."

"There is but one God, Ozema, and he ruleth all, whether in Hayti or in Spain. Thou rememberest what I have told thee of his love, and of the manner of his death, that we might all be saved, and thou didst then promise to worship him, and to be baptised when we should reach my country."

"God! — Ozema do, what Ozema say. Love Luis's God already."

"Thou hast seen the holy cross, Ozema, and hast promised me to kiss it, and bless it."

"Where cross? See no cross — up in heaven? — or where? Show Ozema cross, now — Luis's cross — cross Luis love."

The young man wore the parting gift of Mercedes near his heart, and raising a hand he withdrew the small jewel, pressed it to his own lips with pious fervour, and then offered it to the Indian girl.

"See"—he said—"this is a cross; we Spaniards revere and bless it. It is our pledge of happiness."

"That Luis's God?" inquired Ozema, in a little surprise.

"Not so, my poor benighted girl"—

"What benighted?" interrupted the quick-witted Haytian, eagerly, for no term that the young man could or did apply to her, fell unheeded on her vigilant and attentive ear.

"Benighted means those who have never heard of the cross, or of its endless mercies."

"Ozema no benighted now," exclaimed the other, pressing the bauble to her bosom. "Got cross—keep cross—

no benighted again, never. Cross, Mercedes"—for, by one of those mistakes that are not unfrequent in the commencement of all communications between those who speak different tongues, the young Indian had caught the notion, from many of Luis's involuntary exclamations, that "Mercedes" meant all that was excellent.

"I would, indeed, that she of whom thou speakest had thee in her gentle care, that she might lead thy pure soul to a just knowledge of thy Creator! That cross cometh of Mercedes, if it be not Mercedes herself, and thou dost well in loving it, and in blessing it. Place the chain around thy neck, Ozema, for the precious emblem may help in preserving thee, should the gale throw us on the coast, ere morning. *That cross is a sign of undying love.*"

The girl understood enough of this, especially as the direction was seconded by a little gentle aid, on the part of our hero, to comply, and the chain was soon thrown around her neck, with the holy emblem resting on her bosom. The change in the temperature, as well as a sense of propriety, had induced the admiral to cause ample robes of cotton to be furnished all the females, and Ozema's beautiful form was now closely enveloped in one, and beneath its folds she had hidden the jewel, which she fondly hugged to her heart, as a gift of Luis. Not so did the young man, himself, view the matter. He had merely meant to lend, in a moment of extreme peril, that which the superstitious feeling of the age seriously induced him to fancy might prove a substantial safeguard. As Ozema was by no means expert in managing the encumbrance of a dress to which she was unaccustomed, even while native taste had taught her to throw it around her person gracefully, the young man had half unconsciously assisted in placing the cross in its new position, when a violent roll of the vessel compelled him to sustain the girl by encircling her waist with an arm. Partly yielding to the motion of the caravel, which was constantly jerking even the mariners from their feet, and probably as much seduced by the tenderness of her own heart, Ozema did not rebuke this liberty, the first our hero had ever offered, but stood, in confiding innocence, upheld by the arm that, of all others, it was most grateful to her feelings to believe destined to perform that office for

life. In another moment, her head rested on his bosom, and her face was turned upward, with the eyes fastened on the countenance of the young noble.

"Thou art less alarmed at this terrific storm, Ozema, than I could have hoped. Apprehension for thee has made me more miserable than I could have thought possible, and yet thou seemest not to be disturbed."

"Ozema no unhappy—no want Hayti—no want Mattinao—no want any thing—Ozema happy now. Got cross."

"Sweet, guileless innocent, may'st thou never know any other feelings!—confide in thy cross."

"Cross, Mercedes — Luis, Mercedes. Luis and Ozema keep cross for ever."

It was perhaps fortunate for this high-prized happiness of the girl, that the Niña now took a plunge that unavoidably compelled our hero to release his hold of her person, cr to drag her with him headlong towards the place where Columbus stood, sheltering his weatherbeaten form from a portion of the violence of the tempest. When he recovered his feet, he perceived that the door of the cabin was closed, and that Ozema was no longer to be seen.

"Dost thou find our female friends terrified by this appalling scene, son Luis?" Columbus quietly demanded, for, though his own thoughts had been much occupied by the situation of the caravel, he had noted all that had just passed so near him. "They are stout of heart, but even an amazon might quail at this tempest."

"They heed it not, Señor, for I think they understand it not. The civilized man is so much their superior that both men and women appear to have every confidence in our means of safety. I have just given Ozema a cross, and bade her place her greatest reliance on that."

"Thou hast done well; it is now the surest protector of us all. Keep the head of the caravel as near to the wind as may be, Sancho, when it lulls, every inch off shore being so much gained in the way of security."

The usual reply was made, and then the conversation ceased; the raging of the elements, and the fearful manner in which the Niña was compelled to struggle literally to keep on the surface of the ocean, affording ample matter for the reflections of all who witnessed the scene.

In this manner passed the night. When the day broke,

it opened on a scene of wintry violence. The sun was not visible that day, the dark vapour driving so low before the tempest, as to lessen the apparent altitude of the vault of heaven one-half, but the ocean was an undulating sheet of foam. High land soon became visible nearly abeam of the caravel, and all the elder mariners immediately pronounced it to be the rock of Lisbon. As soon as this important fact was ascertained, the admiral wore with the head of the caravel in-shore, and laid his course for the mouth of the Tagus. The distance was not great, some twenty miles perhaps; but the necessity of facing the tempest, and of making sail, on a wind, in such a storm, rendered the situation of the caravel more critical than it had been in all her previous trials. At that moment, the policy of the Portuguese was forgotten, or held to be entirely a secondary consideration, a port or shipwreck appearing to be the alternative. Every inch of their weatherly position became of importance to the navigators, and Vicente Yañez placed himself near the helm to watch its play with the vigilance of experience and authority. No sail but the lowest could be carried, and these were reefed as closely as their construction would allow.

In this manner the tempest-tossed little barque struggled forward, now sinking so low in the troughs, that land, ocean, and all but the frowning billows, with the clouds above their heads, were lost to view; and now rising, as it might be, from the calm of a sombre cavern, into the roaring, hissing, and turbulence of a tempest. These latter moments were the most critical. When the light hull reached the summit of a wave, falling over to windward by the yielding of the element beneath her, it seemed as if the next billow must inevitably overwhelm her; and yet, so vigilant was the eye of Vicente Yañez, and so ready the hand of Sancho, that she ever escaped the calamity. To keep the wash of the sea entirely out, was, however, impossible; and it often swept athwart the deck, forward, like the sheets of a cataract, that part of the vessel being completely abandoned by the crew.

"All now depends on our canvass," said the admiral, with a sigh; "if that stand, we are safer than when scud-

ding, and I think God is with us. To me it seemeth as if the wind was a little less violent than in the night."

"Perhaps it is, Señor. I believe we gain on the place you pointed out to me."

"It is yon rocky point. *That* weathered, and we are safe. That not weathered, and we see our common grave."

"The caravel behaveth nobly, and I will still hope."

An hour later, and the land was so near that human beings were seen moving on it. There are moments when life and death may be said to be equally presented to the seaman's sight. On one side is destruction; on the other security. As the vessel drew slowly in towards the shore, not only was the thunder of the surf upon the rocks audible, but the frightful manner in which the water was tossed upward in spray, gave additional horrors to the view. On such occasions, it is no uncommon thing to see *jets d'eau* hundreds of feet in height, and the driving spray is often carried to a great distance inland, before the wind. Lisbon has the whole rake of the Atlantic before it, unbroken by island or headland; and the entire coast of Portugal is one of the most exposed of Europe. The south-west gales, in particular, drive across twelve hundred leagues of ocean, and the billows they send in upon its shores, are truly appalling. Nor was the storm we are endeavouring to describe, one of common occurrence. The season had been tempestuous, seldom leaving the Atlantic any peace; and the surges produced by one gale had not time to subside, ere another drove up the water in a new direction, giving rise to that irregularity of motion which most distresses a vessel, and which is particularly hazardous to small ones.

"She looks up better, Don Christopher!" exclaimed Luis, as they got within musket-shot of the desired point,—"another ten minutes, of as favourable a slant, and we do it!"

"Thou art right, son," answered the admiral calmly. "Were any calamity to throw us ashore on yonder rocks, two planks of the Niña would not hold together five minutes. Ease her — good Vicente Yañez — ease her, quite a point, and let her go through the water. All depends on the canvass, and we can spare that point. She moves, Luis!—Regard the land, and thou wilt now see our motion."

"True, Señor, but the caravel is drawing frightfully near the point!"

"Fear not; a bold course is often the safest. It is a deep shore, and we need but little water."

No one now spoke. The caravel was dashing in towards the point with appalling speed, and every minute brought her perceptibly nearer to the cauldron of water that was foaming around it. Without absolutely entering within this vortex, the Niña flew along its edge, and, in five minutes more, she had a direct course up the Tagus open before her. The mainsail was now taken in, and the mariners stood fearlessly on, certain of a haven, and security.

Thus, virtually, ended the greatest marine exploit the world has ever witnessed. It is true that a run round to Palos was subsequently made, but it was insignificant in distance, and not fruitful in incidents. Columbus had effected his vast purpose, and his success was no longer a secret. His reception in Portugal is known, as well as all the leading occurrences that took place at Lisbon. He anchored in the Tagus on the 4th of March, and left it again on the 13th. On the morning of the 14th, the Niña was off Cape St. Vincent, when she hauled in to the eastward, with a light air from the north. At sunrise on the 15th she was again off the bar of Saltes, after an absence of only two hundred and twenty-four days.

CHAPTER X.

> "One evening-tide, as with her crones she sate,
> Making sweet solace of some scandall new,
> A boisterous noise came thondring at the gate,
> And soon a sturdie boy approach'd in view;
> With gold far glitteraund were his vestments blue,
> And pye-shaped hat, and of the silver sheen
> An huge broad buckle glaunst in either shoe,
> And round his necke an Indian kerchiefe clean,
> And in his hand a switch;—a jolly wight I ween."
>
> MICKLE.

NOTWITHSTANDING the noble conceptions that lay at the bottom of the voyage we have just related, the perseverance and self-devotion that were necessary to its accomplishment, and the magnificence of the consequences that were dependent on its success, it attracted very little attention, amid the stirring incidents and active selfishness of the age, until the result was known. Only a month before the arrangement was made with Columbus, the memorable edict of the two sovereigns, for the expulsion of the Jews, had been signed; and this uprooting of so large a portion of the Spanish nation was, of itself, an event likely to draw off the eyes of the people from an enterprise deemed as doubtful, and which was sustained by means so insignificant, as that of the great navigator. The close of the month of July had been set as the latest period for the departure of these persecuted religionists; and thus, at the very time, almost on the very day, when Columbus sailed from Palos, was the attention of the nation directed towards what might be termed a great national calamity. The departure was like the setting forth from Egypt, the highways being thronged with the moving masses, many of which were wandering they knew not whither.

The king and queen had left Granada in May, and after remaining two months in Castile, they passed into Aragon, about the commencement of August, in which kingdom they happened to be when the expedition sailed. Here

they remained throughout the rest of the season, settling affairs of importance, and, quite probably, disposed to avoid the spectacle of the misery their Jewish edict had inflicted, Castile having contained much the greater portion of that class of their subjects. In October, a visit was paid to the turbulent Catalans; the court passing the entire winter in Barcelona. Nor did momentous events cease to occupy them while in this part of their territories. On the 7th of December an attempt was made on the life of Ferdinand; the assassin inflicting a severe, though not a fatal, wound, by a blow on the neck. During the critical weeks in which the life of the king was deemed to be in danger, Isabella watched at his bed-side, with the untiring affection of a devoted wife; and her thoughts dwelt more on her affections than on any worldly aggrandisement. Then followed the investigations into the motives of the criminal; conspiracies ever being distrusted in such cases, although history would probably show that much the greater part of these wicked attempts on the lives of sovereigns, are more the results of individual fanaticism, than of any combined plans to destroy.

Isabella, whose gentle spirit grieved over the misery her religious submission had induced her to inflict on the Jews, was spared the additional sorrow of mourning for a husband, taken away by means so violent. Ferdinand gradually recovered. All these occurrences, together with the general cares of the state, had served to divide the thoughts of even the queen from the voyage; while the politic Ferdinand, in his mind, had long since set down the gold expended in the outfit as so much money lost.

The balmy spring of the south opened as usual, and the fertile province of Catalonia had already become delightful with the fresh verdure of the close of March. The king had, for some weeks, resumed his usual occupations, and Isabella, relieved from her conjugal fears, had again fallen into the quiet current of her duties and her usual acts of beneficence. Indisposed to the gorgeousness of her station by the recent events, and ever pining for the indulgence of the domestic affections, this estimable woman, notwithstanding the strong natural disposition she had always felt for that sort of life, had lived more among her children and confidants, of late, than had been even her wont. Her ear-

liest friend, the Marchioness of Moya, as a matter of course, was ever near her person, and Mercedes passed most of her time either in the immediate presence of her royal mistress, or in that of her children.

There had been a small reception one evening, near the close of the month; and Isabella, glad to escape from such scenes, had withdrawn to her private apartments, to indulge in conversation in the circle she so much loved. It was near the hour of midnight, the king being at work, as usual, in an adjoining closet. There were present, besides the members of the royal family and Doña Beatriz with her lovely niece, the Archbishop of Granada, Luis de St. Angel, and Alonzo de Quintanilla, the two last of whom had been summoned by the prelate, to discuss some question of clerical finance before their illustrious mistress. All business, however, was over, and Isabella was rendering the circle agreeable with the condescension of a princess, and the gentle grace of a woman.

"Are there fresh tidings from the unfortunate and deluded Hebrews, Lord Archbishop?" demanded Isabella, whose kind feelings ever led her to regret the severity which religious dependence on her confessors had induced her to sanction. "Our prayers should surely attend them, notwithstanding our policy and duty have demanded their expulsion."

"Señora," answered Fernando de Talavera, "they are doubtless serving Mammon among the Moors and Turks, as they served him in Spain. Let not your Highness' gracious mind be disturbed on account of these descendants of the enemies and crucifiers of Christ, who, if they suffer at all, do but suffer justly, for the unutterable sin of their forefathers. Let us rather inquire, my gracious mistress, of the Señores St. Angel and Quintanilla here, what hath become of their favourite Colon, the Genoese; and when they look for his return, dragging the Great Khan, a captive, by the beard!"

"We know nought of him, holy prelate," put in de St. Angel briskly, "since his departure from the Canaries."

"The Canaries!" interrupted the queen, in a little surprise. "Hath aught been received, that cometh from that quarter?"

"By report only, Señora. Letters have not reached any in Spain, that I can learn; but there is a rumour from Portugal, that the admiral touched at Gomera and the Grand Canary, where it would seem he had his difficulties, and whence he shortly after departed, holding a western course; since which time no tidings have been received from either of the caravels."

"By which fact, Lord Archbishop," added Quintanilla, "we can perceive that trifles are not likely to turn the adventurers back."

"I'll warrant ye, Señores, that a Genoese adventurer who holdeth their Highnesses' commission as an admiral, will be in no unseemly haste to get rid of the dignity!" rejoined the prelate, laughing without much deference to his mistress's concessions in Columbus's favour. "One does not see rank, authority, and emolument, carelessly thrown aside, when they may be retained by keeping aloof from the power whence they spring."

"Thou art unjust to the Genoese, holy sir, and judgest him harshly," observed the queen. "Truly, I did not know of these tidings from the Canaries, and rejoice to hear that Colon hath got thus far in safety. Hath not the past been esteemed a most boisterous winter among mariners, Señor de St. Angel?"

"So much so, your Highness, that I have heard the seamen here, in Barcelona, swear that, within the memory of man, there hath not been another like it. Should ill luck wait upon Colon, I trust this circumstance may be remembered as his excuse; though I doubt if he be very near any of our tempests and storms."

"Not he!" exclaimed the bishop, triumphantly. "It will be seen that he hath been safely harboured in some river of Africa; and we shall have some question yet to settle about him with Dom Joao of Portugal."

"Here is the king to give us his opinion," interposed Isabella. "It is long since I have heard him mention the name of Colon. Have you entirely forgotten our Genoese admiral, Don Fernando?"

"Before I am questioned on subjects so remote," returned the king, smiling, "let me inquire into matters nearer

home. How long is it that your Highness holdeth court, and giveth receptions, past the hour of midnight?"

"Call you this a court, Señor? Here are but our own dear children, Beatriz and her niece, with the good archbishop, and those two faithful servants of your own."

"True; but you overlook the ante-chambers, and those who await your pleasure without."

"None can await without at this unusual hour; surely you jest, my lord."

"Then your own page, Diego de Ballesteros, hath reported falsely. Unwilling to disturb your privacy, at this unreasonable hour, he hath come to me, saying that one of strange conduct and guise is in the palace, insisting on an interview with the queen, let it be late or early. The accounts of this man's deportment are so singular, that I have ordered him to be admitted, and have come myself to witness the interview. The page telleth me that he swears all hours are alike, and that night and day are equally made for our uses."

"Dearest Don Fernando, there may be treason in this!"

"Fear not, Isabella; assassins are not so bold, and the trusty rapiers of these gentlemen will prove sufficient for our protection—Hist! there are footsteps, and we must appear calm, even though we apprehend a tumult."

The door opened, and Sancho Mundo stood in the royal presence. The air and appearance of so singular a being excited both astonishment and amusement, and every eye was fastened on him in wonder; and this so much the more, because he had decked his person with sundry ornaments from the imaginary Indies, among which were one or two bands of gold. Mercedes alone detected his profession by his air and attire, and she rose involuntarily, clasping her hands with energy, and suffering a slight exclamation to escape her. The queen perceived this little pantomime, and it at once gave a right direction to her own thoughts.

"I am Isabella, the queen," she said, rising, without any further suspicion of danger; "and thou art a messenger from Colon, the Genoese?"

Sancho, who had found great difficulty in gaining admittance, now that his end was obtained, took matters with his native coolness. His first act was to fall on his knees, as

he had been particularly enjoined by Columbus to do. He had caught the habit of using the weed of Hayti and Cuba, from the natives, and was, in fact, the first seaman who ever chewed tobacco. The practice had already got to be confirmed with him, and before he answered, or as soon as he had taken this, for him, novel position, he saw fit to fill a corner of his mouth with the attractive plant. Then, giving his wardrobe a shake, for all the decent clothes he owned were on his person, he disposed himself to make a suitable reply.

"Señora—Doña—your Highness," he answered, "any one might have seen that at a glance. I am Sancho Mundo, of the Ship-Yard Gate; one of your Highness' Excellency's most faithful subjects and mariners, being a native and resident of Moguer."

"Thou comest from Colon, I say?"

"Señora, I do; many thanks to your Royal Grace for the information. Don Christopher hath sent me across the country from Lisbon, seeing that the wily Portuguese would be less likely to distrust a simple mariner, like myself, than one of your every-day, booted couriers. 'T is a weary road, and there is not a mule between the stables of Lisbon and the palace of Barcelona, fit for a Christian to bestride."

"Then, hast thou letters? One like thee can scarcely bear aught else."

"Therein, your Grace's Highness, Doña Reyña, is mistaken; though I am far from bearing half the number of doblas I had at starting. Mass! the innkeepers took me for a grandee, by the manner in which they charged!"

"Give the man gold, good Alonzo—he is one that liketh his reward ere he will speak."

Sancho coolly counted the pieces that were put into his hand, and, finding them greatly to exceed his hopes, he had no longer any motive for prevarication.

"Speak fellow!" cried the king. "Thou triflest, where thou owest thy duty and obedience."

The sharp, quick voice of Ferdinand had much more effect on the ear of Sancho, than the gentler tones of Isabella, notwithstanding even his rude nature had been impressed with the matronly beauty and grace of the latter.

"If your Highness would condescend to let me know what you wish to hear, I will speak in all gladness."

"Where is Colon?" demanded the queen.

"At Lisbon, lately, Señora, though I think now at Palos de Moguer, or in that neighbourhood."

"Whither hath he been?"

"To Cipango, and the territories of the Great Khan; forty days' sail from Gomera, and a country of marvellous beauty and excellence!"

"Thou canst not—darest not trifle with me! Can we put credit in thy words?"

"If your Highness only knew Sancho Mundo, you would not feel this doubt. I tell you, Señora, and all these noble cavaliers and dames, that Don Christopher Colon hath discovered the other side of the earth, which we now know to be round, by having circled it; and that he hath found out that the north star journeyeth about in the heavens, like a gossip spreading her news; and that he hath taken possession of islands as large as Spain, in which gold groweth, and where the holy church may employ itself in making christians to the end of time."

"The letter—Sancho—give me the letter. Colon would scarce send thee as a verbal expositor."

The fellow now undid sundry coverings of cloth and paper, until he reached the missive of Columbus, when, without rising from his knees, he held it out towards the queen, giving her the trouble to move forward several paces to receive it. So unexpected and astounding were the tidings, and so novel the whole scene, that no one interfered, leaving Isabella to be the sole actor, as she was, virtually, the sole speaker. Sancho having thus successfully acquitted himself of a task that had been expressly confided to him on account of his character and appearance, which, it was thought, would prove his security from arrest and plunder, settled down quietly on his heels, for he had been directed not to rise until ordered; and drawing forth the gold he had received, he began coolly to count it anew. So absorbing was the attention all gave to the queen, that no one heeded the mariner or his movements. Isabella opened the letter, which her looks devoured, as they followed line after line. As was usual with Columbus, the missive was long, and it

required many minutes to read it. All this time not an individual moved, every eye being fastened on the speaking countenance of the queen. There, were seen the heightening flush of pleasure and surprise, the glow of delight and wonder, and the look of holy rapture. When the letter was ended, Isabella turned her eyes upward to heaven, clasped her hands with energy, and exclaimed—

"Not unto us, O Lord, but to Thee, be all the honour of this wonderful discovery, all the benefits of this great proof of thy goodness and power!"

Thus saying, she sunk into a seat and dissolved in tears. Ferdinand uttered a slight ejaculation at the words of his royal consort; and then he gently took the letter from her unresisting hand, and read it with great deliberation and care. It was not often that the wary King of Aragon was as much affected, in appearance at least, as on this occasion. The expression of his face, at first, was that of wonder; eagerness, not to say avidity, followed; and when he had finished reading, his grave countenance was unequivocally illuminated by exultation and joy.

"Good Luis de St. Angel!" he cried, "and thou, honest Alonzo de Quintanilla, these must be grateful tidings to you both. Even thou, holy prelate, wilt rejoice that the church is like to have acquisitions so glorious—albeit, no favourer of the Genoese of old. Far more than all our expectations are realized, for Colon hath truly discovered the Indies; increasing our dominions, and otherwise advancing our authority in a most unheard-of manner."

It was unusual to see Don Ferdinand so excited, and he seemed conscious himself, that he was making an extraordinary exhibition, for he immediately advanced to the queen, and taking her hand, he led her towards his own cabinet. In passing out of the saloon, he indicated to the three nobles that they might follow to the council. The king made this sudden movement more from habitual wariness, than any settled object, his mind being disturbed in a way to which he was unaccustomed, while caution formed a part of his religion, as well as of his policy. It is not surprising, therefore, that when he and the party he invited to follow him had left the room, there remained only the princesses, the Marchioness of Moya, and Mercedes. No sooner had

the king and queen disappeared, than the royal children retired to their own apartments, leaving our heroine, her guardian, and Sancho, the sole occupants of the saloon. The latter still remained on his knees, scarce heeding what had passed, so intensely was he occupied with his own situation, and his own particular sources of satisfaction.

"Thou canst rise, friend," observed Doña Beatriz—"their Highnesses are no longer present."

At this intelligence Sancho quitted his humble posture, brushed his knees with some care, and looked about him with the composure that he was wont to exhibit in studying the heavens at sea.

"Thou wert of Colon's company, friend, by the manner in which thou hast spoken, and the circumstance that the admiral hath employed thee as his courier?"

"You may well believe that, Señora, your Excellency, for most of my time was passed at the helm, which was within three fathoms of the very spot that Don Christopher and the Señor de Muños loved so well, that they never quitted it, except to sleep, and not always then."

"Hadst thou a Señor de Muños of thy party?" resumed the Marchioness, making a sign to her ward to control her feelings.

"That had we Señora, and a Señor Gutierrez, and a certain Don Somebody Else, and they all three did not occupy more room than one common man. Prithee, honourable and agreeable Señora, is there one Doña Beatriz de Cabrera, the Marchioness of Moya, a lady of the illustrious house of Bobadilla, anywhere about the court of our gracious queen?"

"I am she, and thou hast a message for me, from this very Señor de Muños, of whom thou hast spoken."

"I no longer wonder that there are great lords with their beautiful ladies, and poor sailors with wives, that no one envies! Scarce can I open my mouth, but it is known what I wish to say, which is knowledge to make one party great, and the other party little! Mass!—Don Christopher, himself, will need all his wit, if he journeyeth as far as Barcelona!"

"Tell us of this Pedro de Muños; for thy message is to me."

"Then, Señora, I will tell you of your own brave nephew, the Conde de Llera, who goeth by two other names in the caravel, one of which is supposed to be a sham, while the other is still the greatest deception of the two."

"Is it then known who my nephew really is? Are many persons acquainted with his secret?"

"Certainly, Señora; it is known, firstly, to himself; secondly, to Don Christopher; thirdly, to me; fourthly, to Master Alonzo Pinzon, if he be still in the flesh, as most probably he is not. Then it is known to your ladyship; and this beautiful Señorita must have some suspicions of the matter."

"Enough—I see the secret is not public; though, how one of thy class came to be of it, I cannot explain. Tell me of my nephew:—did he, too, write? if so, let me, at once, peruse his letter."

"Señora, my departure took Don Luis by surprise, and he had no time to write. The admiral had given the princes and princesses, that we brought from Española, in charge to the Conde, and he had too much to do to be scribbling letters, else would he have written sheets to an aunt as respectable as yourself."

"Princes and princesses!—What mean you, friend, by such high-sounding terms?"

"Only that we have brought several of these great personages to Spain, to pay their respects to their Highnesses. We deal with none of the common fry, Señora, but with the loftiest princes, and the most beautiful princesses of the east."

"And dost thou really mean that persons of this high rank have returned with the admiral?"

"Out of all question, lady, and one of a beauty so rare, that the fairest dames of Castile need look to it, if they wish not to be outdone. She, in particular, is Don Luis's friend and favourite."

"Of whom speakest thou?" demanded Doña Beatriz, in the lofty manner in which she was wont to insist on being answered directly. "What is the name of this princess, and whence doth she come?"

"Her name, your excellency, is Doña Ozema de Hayti, of a part of which country her brother, Don Mattinao, is

cacique or king, Señora Ozema being the heiress, or next of kin. Don Luis and your humble servant paid that court a visit—"

"Thy tale is most improbable, fellow—art thou one whom Don Luis would be likely to select as a companion on such an occasion?"

"Look at it as you will, Señora, it is as true as that this is the court of Don Ferdinand and Doña Isabella. You must know, illustrious Marchioness, that the young count is a little given to roving about among us sailors, and on one occasion, a certain Sancho Mundo, of Moguer, happened to be of the same voyage; and thus we became known to each other. I kept the noble's secret, and he got to be Sancho's friend. When Don Luis went to pay a visit to Don Mattinao, the cacique, which word meaneth 'your Highness,' in the eastern tongue, Sancho must go with him, and Sancho went. When King Caonabo came down from the mountains to carry off the princess Doña Ozema, for a wife, and the princess was unwilling to go, why there remained nothing to be done, but for the Conde de Llera and his friend Sancho of the Ship-Yard Gate, to fight the whole army in her defence, which we did, gaining as great a victory as Don Fernando, our sovereign master, ever gained over the Moors."

"Carrying off the princess yourselves, as would seem! Friend Sancho, of the Ship-Yard Gate, if that be thy appellation, this tale of thine is ingenious, but it lacketh probability. Were I to deal justly by thee, honest Sancho, it would be to order thee the stripes thou meritest so well, as a reward for this trifling."

"The man speaketh as he hath been taught," observed Mercedes, in a low, unsteady voice; "I fear, Señora, there is too much truth in his tale!"

"You need fear nothing, beautiful Señorita," put in Sancho, altogether unmoved at the menace implied by the words of the Marchioness, "since the battle hath been fought, the victory hath been gained, and both the heroes escaped uninjured. This illustrious Señora, to whom I can forgive any thing, as the aunt of the best friend I have on earth—any thing *spoken* I mean—will remember that the Haytians know nothing of arquebuses, by means of which we de-

feated Caonabo, and also, that many is the column of Moors that Don Luis hath broken singly, and by means of his own good lance."

"Ay, fellow," answered Doña Beatriz, "but that hath been in the saddle, behind plaits of steel, and with a weapon that hath overturned even Alonzo de Ojedo!"

"Hast thou truly brought away with thee the princess thou hast named?" asked Mercedes earnestly.

"I swear to it, Señora and Señorita, illustrious ladies both, by the holy mass, and all the saints in the calendar! A princess, moreover, surpassing in beauty the daughters of our own blessed queen, if the fair ladies who passed out of this room, even now, are they, as I suspect."

"Out upon thee, knave!" cried the indignant Beatriz—"I will no more of this, and marvel that my nephew should have employed one of so loose a tongue, on any of his errands. Go to, and learn discretion ere the morning, or the favour of even thy admiral will not save thy bones. Mercedes, we will seek our rest—the hour is late."

Sancho was immediately left alone, and in a minute a page appeared to show him to the place where he was to pass the night. The old mariner had grumbled a little to himself, concerning the spirit of Don Luis's aunt, counted anew his gold, and was about to take possession of his pallet, when the same page re-appeared to summon him to another interview. Sancho, who knew little distinction between night and day, made no objections, especially when he was told that his presence was required by the lovely Señorita, whose gentle, tremulous voice had so much interested him, in the late interview. Mercedes received her rude guest, in a small saloon of her own, after having parted from her guardian for the night. As he entered, her face was flushed, her eye bright, and her whole demeanour, to one more expert in detecting female emotions, would have betrayed intense anxiety.

"Thou hast had a long and weary journey, Sancho," said our heroine, when alone with the seaman, "and, I pray thee accept this gold, as a small proof of the interest with which I have heard the great tidings of which thou hast been the bearer."

"Señorita!" exclaimed Sancho, affecting indifference to

the doblas that fell into his hand—"I hope you do not think me mercenary? the honour of being the messenger, and of being admitted to converse with such illustrious ladies, more than pays me for any thing I could do."

"Still, thou may'st need money for thy wants, and wilt not refuse that which a lady offereth."

"On that ground, I would accept it, Doña Señorita, even were it twice as much."

So saying, Sancho placed the money, with a suitable resignation, by the side of that which he had previously received by order of the queen. Mercedes now found herself in the situation that they who task their powers too much, are often fated to endure; in other words, now she had at command the means of satisfying her own doubts, she hesitated about using them.

"Sancho," Mercedes at length commenced, "thou hast been with the Señor Colon, throughout this great and extraordinary voyage, and must know much that it will be curious for us, who have lived quietly in Spain, to hear. Is all thou hast said about the princes and princesses true?"

"As true, Señorita, as such things need be for a history. Mass!—Any one who hath been in a battle, or seen any other great adventure, and then cometh to hear it read of, afterwards, will soon learn to understand the difference between the thing itself, and the history that may be given of it. Now, I was—"

"Never mind thy other adventures, good Sancho; tell me only of this. Are there really a Prince Mattinao, and a Princess Ozema his sister, and have both accompanied the admiral to Spain?"

"I said not that, beautiful Señorita, for Don Mattinao remained behind to rule his people. It is only his handsome sister, who hath followed Don Christopher and Don Luis to Palos."

"Followed!—Do the admiral and the Conde de Llera possess such influence over royal ladies, as to induce them to abandon their native country and to *follow* them to a foreign land!"

"Ay, Señorita, that might seem out of rule in Castile, or Portugal, or even in France. But Hayti is not yet a Christian country, and a princess there may not be more than

a noble lady in Castile, and, in the way of wardrobe, perhaps not even as much. Still, a princess is a princess, and a handsome princess is a handsome princess. Doña Ozema, here, is a wonderful creature, and beginneth already to prattle your pure Castilian, an' she had been brought up at Toledo, or Burgos. But Don Luis is a most encouraging master, and no doubt made great head-way, during the time he was living in her palace, as it might be alone with her, before that incarnate devil Don Caonabo came down with his followers to seize the lady."

"Is this lady a Christian princess, Sancho?"

"Heaven bless your own pure soul, Doña Señorita, she can boast of but little in that way; still, she hath made something of a beginning, as I see she now weareth a cross —one small in size, it is true, but precious in material, as, indeed, it ought to be, seeing that it is a present from one as noble and rich as the Count of Llera."

"A cross, say'st thou, Sancho!" interrupted Mercedes, almost gasping for breath, yet so far subduing her feelings as to prevent the old seaman from detecting them; "hath Don Luis succeeded in inducing her to accept of a cross?"

"That hath he, Señorita—one of precious stones, that he once wore at his own neck."

"Know'st thou the stones?—was it of turquoise, embellished with the finest gold?"

"For the gold I can answer, lady, though my learning hath never reached as high as the precious stones. The heavens of Hayti, however, are not bluer than the stones of that cross. Doña Ozema calls it 'Mercedes,' by which I understand that she looketh for the mercies of the crucifixion to help her benighted soul."

"Is this cross, then, held so common, that it hath gotten to be the subject of discourse even for men of thy class?"

"Hearkee, Señorita; a man like me is more valued, on board a caravel, in a tossing sea, than he is like to be here, in Barcelona, on solid ground. We went to Cipango to set up crosses, and to make Christians; so that all hath been in character. As for the lady Ozema, she taketh more notice of me than of another, as I was in the battle that rescued her from Caonabo, and so she showed me the cross the day we anchored in the Tagus, or just before the

admiral ordered me to bring his letter to her Highness. Then it was that she kissed the cross, and held it to her heart, and said it was 'Mercedes.'"

"This is most strange, Sancho! Hath this princess attendants, befitting her rank and dignity?"

"You forget, Señorita, that the Niña is but a small craft, as her name signifieth, and there would be no room for a large train of lords and ladies. Don Christopher and Don Luis are honourable enough to attend on any princess; and for the rest, the Doña Ozema must wait until our gracious queen can command her a retinue befitting her birth. Besides, my lady, these Haytian dames are simpler than our Spanish nobles, half of them thinking clothes of no great use, in that mild climate."

Mercedes looked offended, and incredulous; but her curiosity and interest were too active, to permit her to send the man away without further question.

"And Don Luis de Bobadilla was ever with the admiral?" she said, "ever ready to support him, and foremost in all hazards?"

"Señorita, you describe the count as faithfully as if you had been present from first to last. Had you but seen him dealing out his blows upon Caonabo's followers, and the manner in which he kept them all at bay, with the Doña Ozema near him, behind the rocks, it would have drawn tears of admiration from your own lovely eyes."

"The Doña Ozema near him — behind rocks — and assailants held at bay!"

"Si, Señora; you repeat it all like a book. It was much as you say, though the Lady Ozema did not content herself with being behind the rocks, for, when the arrows came thickest, she rushed before the count, compelling the enemy to withhold, lest they should slay the very prize they were battling for; thereby saving the life of her knight."

"Saving his life! — the life of Luis — of Don Luis de Bobadilla — an Indian princess!"

"It is just as you say, and a most noble girl she is, asking pardon for speaking so light of one of her high rank. Time and again, since that day, hath the young count told me, that the arrows came in such clouds, that his honour might have been tarnished by a retreat, or his life been lost,

but for the timely resolution of the Doña Ozema. She is a rare creature, Señorita, and you will love her as a sister, when you come to see and know her."

"Sancho," said our heroine, blushing like the dawn, "thou said'st that the Conde de Llera bade thee speak of him to his aunt; did he mention no one else?"

"No one, Señorita."

"Art certain, Sancho? Bethink thee well—did he mention no other name to thee?"

"Not that I can swear. It is true, that either he, or old Diego, the helmsman, spoke of one Clara that keepeth an *hosteria*, here in Barcelona, as a place famous for its wine; but I think it more likely to have been Diego than the count, as one thinketh much of these matters, and the other would not be apt to know aught of Clara."

"Thou canst retire, Sancho," said Mercedes, in a faint voice. "We will say more to thee in the morning."

Sancho was not sorry to be dismissed, and he gladly returned to his pallet, little dreaming of the mischief he had done by the mixture of truth and exaggeration that he had been recounting.

CHAPTER XI.

"Mac-Homer, too, in prose or song,
By the state-papers of Buffon,
To deep researches led;
A Gallo-Celtic scheme may botch,
To prove the Ourang race were Scotch,
Who from the Highlands fled."

LORD JOHN TOWNSHEND.

THE intelligence of the return of Columbus, and of the important discoveries he had made, spread through Europe like wild-fire. It soon got to be, in the general estimation, the great event of the age. For several years afterwards, or until the discovery of the Pacific by Balboa, it was be-

lieved that the Indies had been reached by the western passage; and of course the problem of the earth's spherical shape was held to be solved by actual experiment. The transactions of the voyage, the wonders seen, the fertility of the soil of the east, the softness of its climate, its treasures in gold, spices, and pearls, and the curious things that the admiral had brought as proofs of his success, were all the themes of the hour. Men never wearied in discussing the subjects. For many centuries had the Spaniards been endeavouring to expel the Moors from the Peninsula; but, as that much-desired event had been the result of time and a protracted struggle, even its complete success seemed tame and insignificant compared with the sudden brilliancy that shone around the western discoveries. In a word, the pious rejoiced in the hope of spreading the gospel; the avaricious feasted their imaginations on untold hoards of gold; the politic calculated the increase of the power of Spain; the scientific exulted in the triumph of mind over prejudice and ignorance, while they hoped for still greater accessions of knowledge; and the enemies of Spain wondered, and deferred, even while they envied.

The first few days that succeeded the arrival of Columbus's courier, were days of delight and curiosity. Answers were sent soliciting his early presence, high honours were proffered to him, and his name filled all mouths, as his glory was in the heart of every true Spaniard. Orders were issued to make the necessary outfits for a new voyage, and little was talked of but the discovery and its consequences. In this manner passed a month, when the admiral arrived at Barcelona, attended by most of the Indians he had brought with him from the islands. His honours were of the noblest kind, the sovereigns receiving him on a throne placed in a public hall, rising at his approach, and insisting on his being seated himself, a distinction of the highest nature, and usually granted only to princes of royal blood. Here the admiral related the history of his voyage, exhibited the curiosities he had brought with him, and dwelt on his hopes of future benefits. When the tale was told, all present knelt, and *Te Deum* was chanted by the usual choir of the court; even Ferdinand's

stern nature dissolving into tears of grateful joy, at this unlooked-for and magnificent behest of heaven.

For a long time, Columbus was the mark of every eye; nor did his honours and consideration cease, until he left Spain, in command of the second expedition to the east, as the voyage was then termed.

A few days previously to the arrival of the admiral at court, Don Luis de Bobadilla suddenly appeared in Barcelona. On ordinary occasions, the movements of one of the rank and peculiarities of the young grandee would have afforded a topic for the courtiers, that would not soon have been exhausted, but the all-engrossing theme of the great voyage afforded him a screen. His presence, however, could not escape notice; and it was whispered, with the usual smiles and shrugs, that he had entered the port in a caravel, coming from the Levant; and it was one of the received pleasantries of the hour to say, in an under tone, that the young Conde de Llera had also made the *eastern* voyage. All this gave our hero little concern, and he was soon pursuing his ordinary life, when near the persons of the sovereigns. The day that Columbus was received in state, he was present in the hall, attired in the richest vestments, and no noble of Spain did more credit to his lineage, or his condition, than Don Luis, by his mien and carriage. It was remarked that Isabella smiled on him, during the pageant; but the head of more than one wary observer was shaken, as its owner remarked how grave the queen's favourite appeared, for an occasion so joyous; a fact that was attributed to the unworthy pursuits of her truant nephew. No one, that day, gazed at Luis with more delight than Sancho, who lingered at Barcelona, to share in the honours of his chief, and who, in virtue of his services, was permitted to take his place among the courtiers themselves. Not a little admiration was excited by the manner in which he used the novel weed, called tobacco; and some fifteen or twenty of his neighbours were nauseated by their efforts to emulate his indulgence and satisfaction. One of his exploits was of a character so unusual, and so well illustrates the feeling of the hour, that it may be well to record it in detail.

The reception was over, and Sancho was quitting the

hall with the rest of the crowd, when he was accosted by a man apparently of forty, well attired, and of agreeable manner, who desired the honour of his presence at a slight entertainment, of which several had been prepared for the admiral and his friends. Sancho, nothing loth, the delights of distinction being yet so novel, cheerfully complied, and he was quickly led to a room of the palace, where he found a party of some twenty young nobles assembled to do him honour; for happy was he that day in Barcelona who could get even one of the meanest of Columbus's followers to accept of his homage. No sooner did the two enter the room, than the young Castilian lords crowded around them, covering Sancho with protestations of admiration, and addressing eager questions, a dozen at a time, to his companion, whom they styled "Señor Pedro"—"Señor Martir," and occasionally "Señor Pedro Martir." It is scarcely necessary to add, that this person was the historian who has become known to us of these latter days as "Peter Martyr," an Italian, to whose care and instruction Isabella had entrusted most of the young nobles of the court. The present interview had been got up to indulge the natural curiosity of the youthful lords, and Sancho had been chosen for the occasion, on the principle that when the best is denied us, we must be content to accept information of an inferior quality.

"Congratulate me, Señores," cried Peter Martyr, as soon as he could find an opportunity to speak, "since my success surpasseth our own hopes. As for the Liguirian, himself, and all of high condition about him, they are in the hands of the most illustrious of Spain, for this day; but here is a most worthy pilot, no doubt the second in authority on board one of the caravels, who consenteth to do us honour, and to partake of our homely cheer. I drew him from a crowd of applicants, and have not yet had an opportunity to enquire his name, which he is about to give us of his own accord."

Sancho never wanted for self-possession, and had far too much mother-wit to be either clownish or offensively vulgar, though the reader is not now to be told that he was neither qualified to be an academician, nor had the most profound notions of natural philosophy. He assumed an

air of suitable dignity, therefore, and, somewhat practised in his new vocation by the thousand interrogatories he had answered in the last month, he disposed himself to do credit to the information of a man who had visited the Indies.

"I am called Sancho Mundo, Señores, at your service,—sometimes Sancho of the Ship-Yard-Gate, though I would prefer now to be called Sancho of the Indies, unless, indeed, it should suit his Excellency Don Christopher to take that appellation—his claim being somewhat better than mine."

Here several protested that his claims were of the highest order; and then followed sundry introductions to Sancho of the Ship-Yard-Gate, of several young men of the first families in Castile; for, though the Spaniards have not the same mania for this species of politeness as the Americans, the occasion was one in which native feeling got the ascendency of conventional reserve. After this ceremony, and the Mendozas, Guzmans, Cerdas, and Toledos, present, felt honoured in knowing this humble seaman, the whole party repaired to the banqueting-room, where a table was spread that did credit to the cooks of Barcelona. During the repast, although the curiosity of the young men made some inroads on their breeding in this particular, no question could induce Sancho to break in upon the duty of the moment, for which he entertained a sort of religious veneration. Once, when pushed a little more closely than common, he laid down his knife and fork, and made the following solemn reply:

"Señores," he said, "I look upon food as a gift from God to man, and hold it to be irreverent to converse much, when the bounties of the table invite us to do homage to this great dispenser. Don Christopher is of this way of thinking, I know, and all his followers imitate their beloved and venerated chief. As soon as I am ready to converse, Señores Don Hidalgos, you shall be told of it, and then God help the ignorant and silly!"

After this admonition, there remained nothing to be said until Sancho's appetite was satisfied, when he drew a little back from the table, and announced his readiness to proceed.

"I profess to very little learning, Señor Pedro Martir," he said; "but what I have seen I have seen, and that which is known, is as well known by a mariner, as by a doctor

of Salamanca. Ask your questions, then, o' heaven's sake, and expect such answers as a poor but honest man can give."

The learned Peter Martyr was fain to make the best of his subject; for at that moment, any information that came from what might be termed first hands, was greedily received; he proceeded, therefore, to his inquiries as simply and as directly as he had been invited to do so.

"Well, Señor," commenced the man of learning, "we are willing to obtain knowledge on any terms. Prithee, tell us, at once, which of all the wonderful things that you witnessed on this voyage, hath made the deepest impression on your mind, and striketh you as the most remarkable!"

"I know nothing to compare with the whiffling of the north star," said Sancho, promptly. "That star hath always been esteemed among us seamen, as being immovable as the cathedral of Seville; but, in this voyage, it hath been seen to change its place, with the inconstancy of the winds."

"That is indeed miraculous!" exclaimed Peter Martyr, who scarcely knew how to take the intelligence; "perhaps there is some mistake, Master Sancho, and you are not accustomed to sidereal investigations."

"Ask Don Christopher; when the phernomerthon, as the admiral called it, was first observed, we talked the matter over together, and came to the conclusion, that nothing in this world was as permanent as it seemed to be. Depend on it, Señor Don Pedro, the north star flits about like a weathercock."

"I shall inquire into this of the illustrious admiral; but, next to this star, Master Sancho, what deem you most worthy of observation? I speak now of ordinary things, leaving science to future discussion."

This was too grave a question to be lightly answered, and while Sancho was cogitating the matter, the door opened and Luis de Bobadilla entered the room, in a blaze of manly grace and rich attire. A dozen voices uttered his name, and Peter Martyr rose to receive him, with a manner in which kindness of feeling was blended with reproof.

"I asked this honour, Señor Conde," he said, "though you have now been beyond my counsel and control some

time, for it appeared to me that one fond of voyages as yourself, might find a useful lesson, as well as enjoy a high satisfaction, in listening to the wonders of an expedition as glorious as this of Colon's. This worthy seaman, a pilot no doubt much confided in by the admiral, hath consented to share in our poor hospitalities on this memorable day, and is about to give us many interesting facts and incidents of the great adventure. Master Sancho Mundo, this is Don Luis de Bobadilla, Conde de Llera, a grandee of high lineage, and one that is not unknown to the seas, having often traversed them in his own person."

"It is quite unnecessary to tell me that, Señor Pedro," answered Sancho, returning Luis' gay and graceful salutation, with profound but awkward respect, "since I see it at a glance. His excellency hath been in the east as well as Don Christopher and myself, though we went different ways, and neither party went quite as far as Cathay. I am honoured in your acquaintance, Don Luis, and shall just say that the noble admiral will bring navigation more in fashion than it hath been of late years. If you travel in the neighbourhood of Moguer, I beg you will not pass the door of Sancho Mundo without stopping to inquire if he be within."

"That I most cheerfully promise, worthy master," said Luis laughing, and taking a seat, "even though it lead me to the Ship-Yard Gate. And now, Señor Pedro, let me not interrupt the discourse, which I discovered was most interesting as I entered."

"I have been thinking of this matter, Señores," resumed Sancho, gravely, "and the fact that appears most curious to me, next to the whiffling of the North Star, is the circumstance that there are no doblas in Cipango. Gold is not wanting, and it seemeth to me passing singular that a people should possess gold, and not bethink them of the convenience of striking doblas, or some similar coin."

Peter Martyr and his young pupils laughed at this sally, and then the subject was pushed in another form.

"Passing by this question, which belongeth rather to the policy of States, than to natural phenomena," continued Peter Martyr, "what most struck you as remarkable, in the way of human nature."

"In that particular, Señor, I think the island of the women may be set down as the most extraordinary of all the phernomerthons we fell in with. I have known women shut themselves up in convents; and men too; but never did I hear, before this voyage, of either shutting themselves up in islands!"

"And is this true?" inquired a dozen voices—"did you really meet with such an island, Señor?"

"I believe we saw it at a distance, Señores, and I hold it to be lucky that we went no nearer, for I find the gossips of Moguer troublesome enough, without meeting a whole island of them. Then there is the bread that grows like a root—what think *you* of that, Señor Don Luis?—Is it not a most curious dish to taste of?"

"Nay, Master Sancho, that is a question of your own putting, and it must be one of your own answering. What know I of the wonders of Cipango, since Candia lieth in an opposite course. Answer these matters for thyself, friend."

"True, illustrious Conde, and I humbly crave your pardon. It is, indeed, the duty of him that seeth to relate, as it is the duty of him that seeth not to believe. I hope all here will perform their several duties."

"Do these Indians eat flesh as remarkable as their bread?" inquired a Cerda.

"That do they, noble sir, seeing that they eat each other. Neither I nor Don Christopher, was invited to any of their feasts of this sort; for, I suppose, they were well convinced we would not go; but we had much information touching them, and by the nearest calculation I could make, the consumption of men in the island of Bohio, must be about equal to that of beeves in Spain."

The speaker was interrupted by twenty exclamations of disgust, and Peter Martyr shook his head like one who distrusted the truth of the account. Still, as he had not expected any very profound philosophy, or deep learning in one of Sancho's character, he pursued the conversation.

"Know you any thing of the rare birds the admiral exhibited to their Highnesses to-day?" he asked.

"Señor, I am well acquainted with several, more particularly with the parrots. They are sensible birds, and I

doubt not might answer some of the questions that are put to me by many here, in Barcelona, to their perfect satisfaction."

"Thou art a wag, I see, Señor Sancho, and lovest thy joke," answered the man of learning, with a smile. "Give way to thy fancy, and if thou canst not improve us with thy science, at least amuse us with thy conceits."

"San Pedro knows that I would do any thing to oblige you, Señores; but I was born with such a love of truth in my heart, that I know not how to embellish. What I see I believe, and having been in the Indies, I cannot shut my eyes to their wonders. There was the sea of weeds, which was no every-day miracle, since I make no doubt that the devils piled all these plants on the water to prevent us from carrying the cross to the poor heathens who dwell on the other side of them. We got through that sea more by our prayers, than by means of the winds."

The young men looked at Peter Martyr, to ascertain how he received this theory, and Peter Martyr, if tinctured with the superstition of the age, was not disposed to swallow all that it pleased Sancho to assert, even though the latter had made a voyage to the Indies.

"Since you manifest so much curiosity, Señores, on the subject of Colon, now admiral of the Ocean Sea, by their Highnesses' honourable appointment, I will, in a measure, relieve your minds on the subject, by recounting what I know," said Luis, speaking calmly, but with dignity. "Ye know that I was much with Don Christopher before he sailed, and that I had some little connexion with bringing him back to Santa Fé, even when he had left the place, as was supposed for the last time. This intimacy hath been renewed since the arrival of the Great Genoese at Barcelona, and hours have we passed together in private, discoursing on the events of the last few months. What I have thus learned I am ready to impart, if ye will do me the grace to listen."

The whole company giving an eager assent, Luis now commenced a general narrative of the voyage, detailing all the leading circumstances of interest, and giving the reasons that were most in favour at the time, concerning the different phenomena that had perplexed the adventurers.

He spoke more than an hour; proceeding consecutively from island to island, and dilating on their productions, imaginary and real. Much that he related, proceeded from the misconceptions of the admiral, and misinterpretations of the signs and language of the Indians, as a matter of course; but it was all told clearly, in elegant if not in eloquent language, and with a singular air of truth. In short, our hero palmed upon his audience the results of his own observation, as the narrative of the admiral, and more than once was he interrupted by bursts of admiration at the vividness and graphic beauties of his descriptions. Even Sancho listened with delight, and when the young man concluded, he rose from his chair, and exclaimed heartily;—

"Señores, you may take all this, as so much gospel! Had the noble Señor witnessed himself, that which he hath so well described, it could not have been truer, and I look on myself to be particularly fortunate to have heard this history of the voyage, which henceforth shall be my history, word for word; for as my patron saint shall remember me, nought else will I tell to the gossips of Moguer, when I get back to that blessed town of my childhood."

Sancho's influence was much impaired by the effects of Luis's narrative, which Peter Martyr pronounced to be one that would have done credit to a scholar who had accompanied the expedition. A few appeals were made to the old seaman, to see if he would corroborate the statements he had just heard, but his protestations became so much the louder in behalf of the accuracy of the account.

It was wonderful how much reputation the Conde de Llera obtained by this little deception. To be able to repeat, with accuracy and effect, language that was supposed to have fallen from the lips of Columbus, was a sort of illustration; and Peter Martyr, who justly enjoyed a high reputation for intelligence, was heard sounding the praises of our hero in all places, his young pupils echoing his words with the ardour and imitation of youth! Such, indeed, was the vast reputation obtained by the Genoese, that one gained a species of reflected renown by being thought to live in his confidence, and a thousand follies of the Count of Llera, real or imaginary, were forgotten in the fact that the admiral had deemed him worthy of being the repository of

facts and feelings such as he had related. As Luis, moreover, was seen to be much in the company of Don Christopher, the world was very willing to give the young man credit for qualities that, by some unexplained circumstance, had hitherto escaped its notice. In this manner did Luis de Bobadilla reap some advantages, of a public character, from his resolution and enterprise, although vastly less than would have attended an open admission of all that occurred. How far, and in what manner, these qualities availed him in his suit with Mercedes, will appear in our subsequent pages.

CHAPTER XII.

> "Each look, each motion, waked a new-born grace,
> That o'er her form its transient glory cast:
> Some lovelier wonder soon usurp'd the place,
> Chased by a charm still lovelier than the last."
>
> MASON.

THE day of the reception of Columbus at Barcelona, had been one of tumultuous feelings, and of sincere delight, with the ingenuous and pure-minded Queen of Castile. She had been the moving spirit of the enterprise, as it was connected with authority and means, and never was a sovereign more amply rewarded, by a consciousness of the magnitude of the results that followed her well-meant and zealous efforts.

When the excitement and bustle of the day were over, Isabella retired to her closet, and there, as was usual with her on all great occasions, she poured out her thankfulness on her knees, entreating the Divine Providence to sustain her under the new responsibilities she felt, and to direct her steps aright, equally as a sovereign, and as a Christian woman. She had left the attitude of prayer but a few minutes, and was seated with her head leaning on her hand, in deep meditation, when a slight knock at the door called her attention. There was but one person in Spain who

would be likely to take even this liberty, guarded and modest as was the tap; rising, she turned the key, and admitted the king.

Isabella was still beautiful. Her form, always of admirable perfection, still retained its grace. Her eyes had lost but little of their lustre, and her smile, ever sweet and beneficent, failed not to reflect the pure and womanly impulses of her heart. In a word, her youthful beauty had been but little impaired by the usual transition to the matronly attractions of a wife and a mother; but this night, all her youthful charms seemed to be suddenly renewed. Her cheek was flushed with holy enthusiasm; her figure dilated with the sublimity of the thoughts in which she had been indulging; and her eyes beamed with the ennobling hopes of religious enthusiasm. Ferdinand was struck with this little change, and he stood admiring her, for a minute, in silence, after he had closed the door.

"Is not this a most wonderful reward, for efforts so small, my husband and love?" exclaimed the queen, who fancied the king's thoughts similar to her own; "a new empire thus cheaply purchased, with riches that the imagination cannot tell, and millions of souls to be redeemed from eternal woe, by means of a grace that must be as unexpected to themselves, as the knowledge of their existence hath been to us!"

"Ever thinking, Isabella, of the welfare of souls! But thou art right; for what are the pomps and glories of the world to the hopes of salvation, and the delights of heaven! I confess Colon hath much exceeded all my hopes, and raised such a future for Spain, that the mind scarce knoweth where to place limits to its pictures."

"Think of the millions of poor Indians that may live to bless our sway, and to feel the influence and consolations of holy church!"

"I trust that our kinsman and neighbour, Dom Joao, will not give us trouble in this matter. Your Portuguese have so keen an appetite for discoveries, that they little relish the success of other powers; and it is said many dangerous and wicked proposals were made to the king, even while our caravels lay in the Tagus."

"Colon assureth me, Fernando, that he doubteth if these

Indians have now any religious creed, so that our ministers will have no prejudices to encounter, in presenting to their simple minds the sublime truths of the gospel!"

"No doubt the admiral hath fully weighed these matters. It is his opinion, that the island he hath called Española wanteth but little of being of the full dimensions of Castile, Leon, Aragon, Granada, and indeed of all our possessions within the peninsula!"

"Didst thou attend to what he said, touching the gentleness and mildness of the inhabitants? And wert thou not struck with the simple, confiding aspects of those he hath brought with him? Such a people may readily be brought, first, as is due, to worship the one true and living God, and next, to regard their sovereigns as kind and benignant parents."

"Authority can ever make itself respected; and Don Christopher hath assured me, in a private conference, that a thousand tried lances would overrun all that eastern region. We must make early application to the Holy Father to settle such limits between us and Don John, as may prevent disputes, hereafter, touching our several interests. I have already spoken to the cardinal on this subject, and he flattereth me with the hope of having the ear of Alexander."

"I trust that the means of disseminating the faith of the cross will not be overlooked in the negotiation; for it paineth me to find churchmen treating of worldly things, to the utter neglect of those of their Great Master."

Don Ferdinand regarded his wife intently for an instant, without making any reply. He perceived, as often happened in questions of policy, that their feelings were not exactly attuned, and he had recourse to an allusion that seldom failed to draw the thoughts of Isabella from their loftier aspirations to considerations more worldly, when rightly applied.

"Thy children, Doña Isabella, will reap a goodly heritage by the success of this, our latest and greatest stroke of policy! Thy dominions and mine will henceforth descend in common to the same heir; then this marriage in Portugal may open the way to new accessions of territory, Granada is already secured to thine, by our united arms; and here hath Providence opened the way to an empire in

the east, that promiseth to outdo all that hath yet been performed in Europe."

"Are not my children thine, Fernando? Can good happen to one, without its equally befalling the other? I trust they will learn to understand why so many new subjects, and such wide territories are added to their possessions, and will ever remain true to their highest and first duty, that of spreading the gospel, that the sway of the one Catholic church may the more speedily be accomplished."

"Still it may be necessary to secure advantages that are offered in a worldly shape, by worldly means."

"Thou sayest true, my lord; and it is the proper care of loving parents to look well to the interest of their offspring in this, as in all other particulars."

Isabella now lent a more willing ear to the politic suggestions of her consort, and they passed an hour in discussing some of the important measures that it was thought their joint interests required should be immediately attended to. After this Ferdinand saluted his wife affectionately, and withdrew to his own cabinet, to labour, as usual, until his frame demanded rest.

Isabella sate musing for a few minutes after the king had retired, and then she took a light and proceeded through certain private passages, with which she was familiar, to the apartment of her daughters. Here she spent an hour, indulging in the affections and discharging the duties of a careful mother, when embracing each in turn, she gave her blessings, and left the place in the same simple manner as she had entered. Instead, however, of returning to her own part of the palace, she pursued her way in an opposite direction, until, reaching a private door, she gently tapped. A voice within bade her enter, and complying, the Queen of Castile found herself alone with her old and tried friend the Marchioness of Moya. A quiet gesture forbade all the usual testimonials of respect, and knowing her mistress's wishes in this particular, the hostess received her illustrious guest, much as she would have received an intimate of her own rank in life.

"We have had so busy and joyful a day, daughter-marchioness," the queen commenced, quietly setting down the little silver lamp she carried, "that I had near forgotten a

duty which ought not to be overlooked. Thy nephew, the Count de Llera, hath returned to court, bearing himself as modestly and as prudently, as if he had no share in the glory of this great success of Colon's!"

"Señora, Luis is here, but whether prudent or modest, I leave for others, who may be less partial, to say."

"To me such seemeth to be his deportment, and a young mind might be pardoned some exultation at such a result. But I have come to speak of Don Luis and thy ward. Now that thy nephew hath given this high proof of his perseverance and courage, there can remain no longer any reason for forbidding their union. Thou knowest that I hold the pledged word of Doña Mercedes, not to marry without my consent, and this night will I make her happy as I feel myself, by leaving her mistress of her own wishes; nay, by letting her know that I desire to see her Countess of Llera, and that right speedily."

"Your Highness is all goodness to me and mine," returned the Marchioness, coldly. "Mercedes ought to feel deeply grateful that her royal mistress hath a thought for her welfare, when her mind hath so many greater concerns to occupy it."

"It is that, my friend, that hath brought me hither at this late hour. My soul is truly burthened with gratitude, and ere I sleep, were it possible, I would fain make all as blessed as I feel myself. Where is thy ward?"

"She left me for the night, but as your Highness entered. I will summon her to hear your pleasure."

"We will go to her, Beatriz; tidings such as I bring should not linger on weary feet."

"It is her duty, and it would be her pleasure to pay all respect, Señora."

"I know that well, Marchioness, but it is my pleasure to bear this news myself," interrupted the queen, leading the way to the door. "Show thou the way, which is better known to thee than to another. We go with little state and ceremony, as thou seest, like Colon going forth to explore his unknown seas, and we go bearers of tidings as grateful to thy ward, as those the Genoese bore to the benighted natives of Cipango. These corridors are our trackless seas,

and all these intricate passages the hidden ways we are to explore."

"Heaven grant your Highness make not some discovery as astounding as that which the Genoese hath just divulged! For myself, I scarce know whether to believe all things, or to grant faith to none."

"I wonder not at thy surprise; it is a feeling that hath overcome all others, through the late extraordinary events," answered the queen, evidently misconceiving the meaning of her friend's words. "But we have still another pleasure in store; that of witnessing the joy of a pure female heart which hath had its trials, and which hath borne them as became a Christian maiden."

Doña Beatriz sighed heavily, but she made no answer. By this time they were crossing the little saloon in which Mercedes was permitted to receive her female acquaintances, and were near the door of her chamber. Here they met a maid, who hastened onward to inform her mistress of the visit she was about to receive. Isabella was accustomed to use a mother's liberties with those she loved, and opening the door, without ceremony, she stood before our heroine, ere the latter could advance to meet her.

"Daughter," commmenced the queen, seating herself, and smiling benignantly on the startled girl, "I have come to discharge a solemn duty. Kneel thou here, at my feet, and listen to thy sovereign as thou wouldst listen to a mother."

Mercedes gladly obeyed, for, at that moment, anything was preferable to being required to speak. When she had knelt, the queen passed an arm affectionately round her neck, and drew her closer to her person, until, by a little gentle violence, the face of Mercedes was hid in the folds of Isabella's robe.

"I have all reason to extol thy faith and duty, child," said the queen, as soon as this little arrangement, to favour the feelings of Mercedes, had been considerately made; "thou hast not forgotten thy promise, in aught; and my object, now, is to leave thee mistress of thine own inclinations, and to remove all impediments to their exercise. Thou hast no longer any pledge with thy sovereign; for,

[illegible] who hath manifested so much discretion and delicacy, may be surely trusted with her own happiness."

Mercedes continued silent, though Isabella fancied that she felt a slight shudder passing convulsively through her delicate frame.

"No answer, daughter?—Is it more preferable to leave another arbitress of thy fate, than to exercise that office for thyself? Well, then, as thy sovereign and parent, I will substitute command for consent, and tell thee it is my wish and desire that thou becomest, as speedily as shall comport with propriety and thy high station, the wedded wife of Don Luis de Bobadilla, Conde de Llera."

"No—no—no—Señora—never—never—" murmured Mercedes, her voice equally stifled by her emotions, and by the manner in which she had buried her face in the dress of the queen.

Isabella looked at the Marchioness of Moya in wonder. Her countenance did not express either displeasure or resentment, for she too well knew the character of our heroine to suspect caprice, or any weak prevarication in a matter that so deeply touched the feelings; and the concern she felt was merely overshadowed at the suddenness of the intelligence, by a feeling of ungovernable surprise.

"Canst thou explain this, Beatriz?" the queen at length inquired. "Have I done harm, where I most intended good? I am truly unfortunate, for I appear to have deeply wounded the heart of this child, at the very moment I fancied I was conferring supreme happiness!"

"No—no—no—Señora," again murmured Mercedes, clinging convulsively to the queen's knees. "Your Highness hath wounded no one—*would* wound no one—*can* wound no one—you are all gracious goodness and thoughtfulness."

"Beatriz, I look to thee for the explanation! Hath ought justifiable occurred to warrant this change of feeling?"

"I fear, dearest Señora, that the feelings continue too much as formerly, and that the change is not in this young and unpractised heart, but in the fickle inclinations of man."

A flash of womanly indignation darted from the usually serene eyes of the queen, and her form assumed all of its native majesty.

"Can this be true?" she exclaimed. "Would a subject of Castile *dare* thus to trifle with his sovereign — thus to trifle with one, sweet and pure as this girl — thus to trifle with his faith with God! If the reckless Conde thinketh to do these acts of wrongfulness with impunity, let him look to it! Shall I punish him that merely depriveth his neighbour of some paltry piece of silver, and let him escape who woundeth the soul? I wonder at thy calmness, daughter-marchioness; thou, who art so wont to let an honest indignation speak out in the just language of a fearless and honest spirit?"

"Alas! Señora, my beloved mistress, my feelings have had vent already, and nature will no more. The boy, moreover, is my brother's son, and when I would fain arouse a resentment against him, such as befitteth his offence, the image of that dear brother, whose very picture he is, hath arisen to my mind in a way to weaken all its energy."

"This is most unusual! A creature so fair—so young—so noble—so rich—every way so excellent, to be so soon forgotten! Canst thou account for it by any wandering inclination, Lady of Moya?"

Isabella spoke musingly, and, as one of her high rank is apt to overlook minor considerations, when the feelings are strongly excited, she did not remember that Mercedes was a listener. The convulsive shudder that again shook the frame of our heroine, however, did not fail to remind her of this fact, and the queen could not have pressed the princess Juana more fondly to her heart, than she now drew the yielding form of our heroine.

"What would you, Señora?" returned the Marchioness, bitterly. "Luis, thoughtless and unprincipled boy as he is, hath induced a youthful Indian princess to abandon home and friends, under the pretence of swelling the triumph of the admiral, but really, in obedience to a wandering fancy, and in submission to those evil caprices, that make men what, in sooth, they are, and which so often render unhappy women their dupes and their victims."

"An Indian princess, say'st thou?—The admiral made one of that rank known to us, but she was already a wife, and far from being one to rival Doña Mercedes of Valverde."

"Ah! dearest Señora, she of whom you speak will not compare with her I mean—Ozema—for so is the Indian lady called—Ozema is a different being, and is not without high claims to personal beauty. Could mere personal appearances justify the conduct of the boy, he would not be altogether without excuse."

"How knowest thou this, Beatriz?"

"Because, your Highness, Luis hath brought her to the palace, and she is, at this moment, in these very apartments. Mercedes hath received her like a sister, even while the stranger hath unconsciously crushed her heart."

"*Here*, say'st thou, marchioness! Then can there be no vicious union between the thoughtless young man and the stranger. Thy nephew would not thus presume to offend virtue and innocence."

"Of that we complain not, Señora. 'Tis the boyish inconstancy, and thoughtless cruelty of the count, that hath awakened my feelings against him. Never have I endeavoured to influence my ward to favour his suit, for I would not that they should have it in their power to say I sought a union so honourable and advantageous to our house; but now do I most earnestly desire her to steel her noble heart to his unworthiness."

"Ah! Señora—my guardian," murmured Mercedes, "Luis is not so *very* culpable. Ozema's beauty, and my own want of the means to keep him true, are alone to blame."

"Ozema's beauty!" slowly repeated the queen. "Is this young Indian, then, so very perfect, Beatriz, that thy ward need fear, or envy her? I did not think that such a being lived!"

"Your Highness knoweth how it is with men. They love novelties, and are most captivated with the freshest faces. San Iago!—Andres de Cabrera hath caused me to know this, though it were a crime to suppose any could teach this hard lesson to Isabella of Trastamara."

"Restrain thy strong and impetuous feelings, daughter-marchioness," returned the queen, glancing her eye at the bowed form of Mercedes, whose head was now buried in her lap; "truth seldom asserts its fullest power when the heart is overflowing with feeling. Don Andres hath been

a loyal subject, and doth justice to thy merit; and, as to my Lord the King, he is the father of my children, as well as thy sovereign.—But, touching this Ozema—can I see her, Beatriz?"

"You have only to command, Señora, to see whom you please. But Ozema is, no doubt, at hand, and can be brought into your presence as soon as it may please your Highness to order it done."

"Nay, Beatriz, if she be a princess, and a stranger in the kingdom, there is a consideration due to her rank and to her position. Let Doña Mercedes go and prepare her to receive us; I will visit her in her own apartment. The hour is late, but she will overlook the want of ceremony in the desire to do her service."

Mercedes did not wait a second bidding, but, rising from her knees, she hastened to do as the queen had suggested. Isabella and the Marchioness were silent some little time, when left to themselves; then the former, as became her rank, opened the discourse.

"It is remarkable, Beatriz, that Colon should not have spoken to me of this princess!" she said. "One of her condition ought not to have entered Spain with so little ceremony."

"The admiral hath deemed her the chosen subject of Luis's care, and hath left her to be presented to your Highness by my recreant nephew. Ah, Señora! is it not wonderful, that one like Mercedes could be so soon supplanted by a half-naked, unbaptized, benighted being, on whom the church hath never yet smiled, and whose very soul may be said to be in jeopardy of instantaneous condemnation?"

"That soul must be cared for, Beatriz, and that right quickly. Is the princess really of sufficient beauty to supplant a creature as lovely as the Doña Mercedes?"

"It is not that, Señora,—it is not that. But men are fickle,—and they so love novelties! Then is the modest restraint of cultivated manners, less winning to them, than the freedom of those who deem even clothes superfluous. I mean not to question the modesty of Ozema; for, according to her habits, she seemeth irreproachable in this respect; but the ill-regulated fancy of a thoughtless boy may find a momentary attraction in her unfettered conduct and half-

attired person, that is wanting to the air and manners of a high-born Spanish damsel, who hath been taught rigidly to respect herself and her sex."

"This may be true, as toucheth the vulgar, Beatriz, but such unworthy motives can never influence the Conde de Llera. If thy nephew hath really proved the recreant thou supposest, this Indian princess must be of more excellence than we have thought."

"Of that, Señora, you can soon judge for yourself; here is the maiden of Mercedes to inform us that the Indian is ready to receive the honour that your Highness intendeth."

Our heroine had prepared Ozema to meet the queen. By this time, the young Haytian had caught so many Spanish words, that verbal communication with her was far from difficult, though she still spoke in the disconnected and abrupt manner of one to whom the language was new. She understood perfectly that she was to meet that beloved sovereign, of whom Luis and Mercedes had so often spoken with reverence; and, accustomed herself, to look up to caciques greater than her brother, there was no difficulty in making her understand that the person she was now about to receive was the first of her sex in Spain. The only misconception which existed, arose from the circumstance that Ozema believed Isabella to be the queen of all the Christian world, instead of being the queen of a particular country; for, in her imagination, both Luis and Mercedes were persons of royal station.

Although Isabella was prepared to see a being of surprising perfection of form, she started with surprise, as her eye first fell on Ozema. It was not so much the beauty of the young Indian, that astonished her, as the native grace of her movements, the bright and happy expression of her countenance, and the perfect self-possession of her mien and deportment. Ozema had got accustomed to a degree of dress that she would have found oppressive at Hayti; the sensitiveness of Mercedes, on the subject of female propriety, having induced her to lavish on her new friend many rich articles of attire, that singularly, though wildly, contributed to aid her charms. Still the gift of Luis was thrown over one shoulder, as the highest-prized part of her wardrobe,

and the cross of Mercedes rested on her bosom, the most precious of all her ornaments.

"This is wonderful, Beatriz!" exclaimed the queen, as she stood at one side of the room, while Ozema bowed her body in graceful reverence on the other; "can this rare being really have a soul that knoweth nought of its God and Redeemer!—But let her spirit be benighted as it may, there is no vice in that simple mind, or deceit in that pure heart."

"Señora, all this is true. Spite of our causes of dissatisfaction, my ward and I both love her already, and could take her to our hearts for ever; one as a friend, and the other as a parent."

"Princess," said the queen, advancing with quiet dignity to the spot where Ozema stood, with downcast eyes and bended body, waiting her pleasure, "thou art welcome to our dominions. The admiral hath done well in not classing one of thy evident claims and station among those whom he hath exhibited to vulgar eyes. In this he hath shown his customary judgment, no less than his deep respect for the sacred office of sovereigns."

"Almirante!" exclaimed Ozema, her looks brightening with intelligence, for she had long known how to pronounce the well-earned title of Columbus; "Almirante, Mercedes; —Isabella, Mercedes—Luis, Mercedes, Señora Reyña."

"Beatriz, what meaneth this? Why doth the princess couple the name of thy ward with that of Colon, with mine, and even with that of the young Count of Llera?"

"Señora, by some strange delusion, she hath got to think that Mercedes is the Spanish term for every thing that is excellent or perfect, and thus doth she couple it with all that she most desireth to praise. Your Highness must observe that she even united Luis and Mercedes, a union that we once fondly hoped might happen, but which now would seem to be impossible; and which she herself must be the last really to wish."

"Strange delusion!" repeated the queen; "the idea hath had its birth in some particular cause, for things like this come not of accidents; who but thy nephew, Beatriz, would know aught of thy ward, or who but he would have taught the princess to deem her very name a sign of excellence?"

"Señora!" exclaimed Mercedes, the colour mounting to

her pale cheek, and joy momentarily flashing in her eyes, "can this be so?"

"Why not, daughter? We may have been too hasty in this matter, and mistaken what are truly signs of devotion to thee, for proofs of fickleness and inconstancy."

"Ah! Señora! but this can never be, else would not Ozema so love him."

"How knowest thou, child, that the princess hath any other feeling for the count than that which properly belongeth to one who is grateful for his care, and for the inexpressible service of being made acquainted with the virtues of the cross? Here is some rash error, Beatriz."

"I fear not, your Highness. Touching the nature of Ozema's feelings, there can be no misconception, since the innocent and unpractised creature hath not art sufficient to conceal them. That her heart is all Luis's, we discovered in the first few hours of our intercourse; and it is too pure, unsought, to be won. The feeling of the Indian is not merely admiration, but it is such a passionate devotion, as partaketh of the warmth of that sun, which, we are told, glows with a heat so genial in her native clime."

"*Could* one see so much of Don Luis, Señora," added Mercedes, "under circumstances to try his martial virtues, and so long daily be in communion with his excellent heart, and not come to view him as far above all others?"

"Martial virtues—excellent heart!"—slowly repeated the queen, "and yet so regardless of the wrong he doeth! He is neither knight nor cavalier worthy of the sex, if what thou thinkest be true, child."

"Nay, Señora," earnestly resumed the girl, whose diffidence was yielding to the wish to vindicate our hero, "the princess hath told us of the manner in which he rescued her from her greatest enemy and persecutor, Caonabo, a headstrong and tyrannical sovereign of her island, and of his generous self-devotion in her behalf."

"Daughter, do thou withdraw, and, first calling on Holy Maria to intercede for thee, seek the calm of religious peace and submission, on thy pillow. Beatriz, I will question the princess alone."

The Marchioness and Mercedes immediately withdrew, leaving Isabella with Ozema, in possession of the room.

The interview that followed lasted more than an hour, that time being necessary to enable the queen to form an opinion of the stranger's explanations, with the imperfect means of communication she possessed. That Ozema's whole heart was Luis's, Isabella could not doubt. Unaccustomed to conceal her preferences, the Indian girl was too unpractised to succeed in such a design, had she even felt the desire to attempt it; but, in addition to her native ingenuousness, Ozema believed that duty required her to have no concealments from the sovereign of Luis, and she laid bare her whole soul in the simplest and least disguised manner.

"Princess," said the queen, after the conversation had lasted some time, and Isabella believed herself to be in possession of the means of comprehending her companion, "I now understand your tale. Caonabo is the chief, or if thou wilt, the king of a country adjoining thine own; he sought thee for a wife, but being already married to more than one princess, thou didst very properly reject his unholy proposals. He then attempted to seize thee by violence. The Conde de Llera was on a visit to thy brother at the time—"

"Luis—Luis"—the girl impatiently interrupted in her sweet soft voice—"Luis—no Conde—Luis."

"True, princess, but the Conde de Llera and Luis de Bobadilla are one and the same person. Luis, then, if thou wilt, was present in thy palace, and he beat back the presumptuous cacique, who, not satisfied with fulfilling the law of God by the possession of one wife, impiously sought, in thy person, a second, or a third, and brought thee off in triumph. Thy brother, next, requested thee to take shelter, for a time, in Spain, and Don Luis, becoming thy guardian and protector, hath brought thee hither to the care of his aunt?"

Ozema bowed her head in acknowledgment of the truth of this statement, most of which she had no difficulty in understanding, the subject having, of late, occupied so much of her thoughts.

"And, now, princess," continued Isabella, "I must speak to thee with maternal frankness, for I deem all of thy birth my children while they dwell in my realms, and have a right to look to me for advice and protection. Hast thou

any such love for Don Luis as would induce thee to forget thine own country, and to adopt his in its stead?"

"Ozema don't know what 'adopt his,' means," observed the puzzled girl.

"I wish to inquire if thou would'st consent to become the wife of Don Luis de Bobadilla?"

"Wife" and "husband" were words of which the Indian girl had early learned the signification, and she smiled guilelessly, even while she blushed, and nodded her assent.

"I am, then, to understand that thou expect'st to marry the Count, for no modest young female, like thee, would so cheerfully avow her preference, without having that hope ripened in her heart, to something like certainty."

"Sí, Señora—Ozema, Luis' wife."

"Thou meanest, princess, that Ozema expecteth shortly to wed the Count—shortly to become his wife?"

"No—no—no—Ozema *now* Luis' wife. Luis marry Ozema, already."

"Can this be so?" exclaimed the queen, looking steadily into the face of the beautiful Indian to ascertain if the whole were not an artful deception. But the open and innocent face betrayed no guilt, and Isabella felt compelled to believe what she had heard. In order, however, to make certain of the fact, she questioned and cross-questioned Ozema, for near half an hour longer, and always with the same result.

When the queen arose to withdraw, she kissed the princess, for so she deemed this wild creature of an unknown and novel state of society, and whispered a devout prayer for the enlightenment of her mind, and for her future peace. On reaching her own apartment, she found the Marchioness of Moya in attendance, that tried friend being unable to sleep until she had learned the impressions of her royal mistress.

"'T is even worse than we had imagined, Beatriz," said Isabella, as the other closed the door behind her. "Thine heartless, inconstant, nephew hath already wedded the Indian, and she is, at this moment, his lawful wife."

"Señora, there must be some mistake in this! The rash boy would hardly dare to practise this imposition on me, and that in the very presence of Mercedes."

"He would sooner place his wife in thy care, daughter-marchioness, than make the same disposition of one who had fewer claims on him. But there can be no mistake. I have questioned the princess closely, and no doubt remaineth in my mind, that the nuptials have been solemnized by religious rites. It is not easy to understand all she would wish to say, but that much she often and distinctly hath affirmed."

"Your Highness—*can* a Christian contract marriage with one that is yet unbaptised?"

"Certainly not, in the eye of the church, which is the eye of God. But I rather think Ozema hath received this holy rite, for she often pointed to the cross she weareth, when speaking of the union with thy nephew. Indeed, from her allusions, I understood her to say that she became a Christian, ere she became a wife."

"And that blessed cross, Señora, was a gift of Mercedes to the reckless, fickle-minded boy; a parting gift, in which the holy symbol was intended to remind him of constancy and faith!"

"The world maketh so many inroads into the hearts of men, Beatriz, that they know not woman's reliance and woman's fidelity. But to thy knees, and bethink thee of asking for grace to sustain thy ward, in this cruel, but unavoidable, extremity."

Isabella now turned to her friend, who advanced and raised the hand of her royal mistress to her lips. The queen, however, was not content with this salutation, warm as it was; passing an arm around the neck of Doña Beatriz, she drew her to her person, and imprinted a kiss on her forehead.

"Adieu, Beatriz—true friend as thou art!" she said. "If constancy hath deserted all others, it hath still an abode in thy faithful heart."

With these words the queen and the marchioness separated each to find her pillow, if not her repose.

CHAPTER XIII.

> "Now, Gondarino, what can you put on now
> That may deceive us?
> Have ye more strange illusions, yet more mists,
> Through which the weak eye may be led to error:
> What can ye say that may do satisfaction
> Both for her wronged honour and your ill?
>
> BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

THE day which succeeded the interview related in the preceding chapter, was that which Cardinal Mendoza had selected for the celebrated banquet given to Columbus. On this occasion, most of the high nobility of the court were assembled in honour of the admiral, who was received with a distinction which fell little short of that usually devoted to crowned heads. The Genoese bore himself modestly, though nobly, in all these ceremonies; and, for the hour, all appeared to delight in doing justice to his great exploits, and to sympathise in a success so much surpassing the general expectation. Every eye seemed riveted on his person, every ear listened eagerly to the syllables as they fell from his lips, every voice was loud and willing in his his praise.

As a matter of course, on such an occasion, Columbus was expected to give some account of his voyage and adventures. This was not an easy task, since it was virtually asserting how much his own perseverance and spirit, his sagacity and skill, were superior to the knowledge and enterprise of the age. Still, the admiral acquitted himself with dexterity and credit, touching principally on those heads which most redounded to the glory of Spain, and the lustre of the two crowns.

Among the guests, was Luis de Bobadilla. The young man had been invited on account of his high rank, and in consideration of the confidence and familiarity with which he was evidently treated by the admiral. The friendship of Columbus was more than sufficient to erase the slightly

unfavourable impressions that had been produced by Luis's early levities, and men quietly submitted to the influence of the great man's example, without stopping to question the motive, or the end. The consciousness of having done that which few of his station and hopes would ever dream of attempting, gave to the proud mien and handsome countenance of Luis, a seriousness and elevation that had not always been seated there, and helped to sustain him in the good opinion that he had otherwise so cheaply purchased. The manner in which he had related to Peter Martyr and his companions the events of the expedition was also remembered, and, without understanding exactly why, the world was beginning to associate him, in some mysterious manner, with the great western voyage. Owing to these accidental circumstances, our hero was actually reaping some few of the advantages of his spirit, though in a way he had never anticipated; a result by no means extraordinary, men as often receiving applause, or reprobation, for acts that were never meditated, as for those for which reason and justice would hold them rigidly responsible.

"Here is a health to my lord, their Highnesses' admiral of the Ocean Sea," cried Luis de St. Angel, raising his cup, so that all at the board might witness the act. "Spain oweth him her gratitude for the boldest and most beneficial enterprise of the age, and no good subject of the two Sovereigns will hesitate to do him honour for his services."

The bumper was drunk, and the meek acknowledgments of Columbus were listened to in respectful silence.

"Lord Cardinal," resumed the free-speaking accountant of the church's revenues, "I look upon the church's cure as doubled by these discoveries, and esteem the number of souls that will be rescued from perdition by the means that will now be employed to save them, as forming no small part of the lustre of the exploit, and a thing not likely to be forgotten at Rome."

"Thou say'st well, good de St. Angel," returned the Cardinal, "and the Holy Father will not overlook God's agent, or his assistants. Knowledge came from the east, and we have long looked forward to the time, when, purified by revelation and the high commission that we hold

direct from the source of all power, it would be rolled backward to its place of beginning; but we now see that its course is still to be westward, reaching Asia by a path that, until this great discovery, was hid from human eyes."

Although so much apparent sympathy ruled at the festival, the human heart was at work, and envy, the basest and perhaps the most common of our passions, was fast swelling in more than one breath. The remark of the Cardinal produced an exhibition of the influence of this unworthy feeling that might otherwise have been smothered. Among the guests was a noble of the name of Juan de Orbitello, and he could listen no longer, in silence, to the praises of those whose breath he had been accustomed to consider fame.

"Is it so certain, holy sir," he said, addressing his host, "that God would not have directed other means to be employed, to effect this end, had these of Don Christopher failed? Or, are we to look upon this voyage as the only known way in which all these heathen could be rescued from perdition?"

"No one may presume, Señor, to limit the agencies of heaven," returned the cardinal, gravely; "nor is it the office of man to question the means employed, or to doubt the power to create others, as wisdom may dictate. Least of all, should laymen call in question aught that the church sanctioneth."

"This I admit, Lord Cardinal," answered the Señor de Orbitello, a little embarrassed, and somewhat vexed at the implied rebuke of the churchman's remarks, "and it was the least of my intentions to do so. But, you, Señor Don Christopher, did you deem yourself an agent of heaven in this expedition?"

"I have always considered myself a most unworthy instrument, set apart for this great end, Señor," returned the admiral, with a grave solemnity that was well suited to impose on the spectators. "From the first, I have felt this impulse, as being of divine origin, and I humbly trust heaven is not displeased with the creature it hath employed."

"Do you then imagine, Señor Almirante, that Spain could not produce another, fitted equallv with yourself, to

execute this great enterprise, had any accident prevented either your sailing or your success?"

The boldness, as well as the singularity of this question, produced a general pause in the conversation, and every head was bent a little forward in expectation of the reply. Columbus sate silent for more than a minute; then, reaching forward, he took an egg, and holding it up to view, he spoke mildly, but with great gravity and earnestness of manner.

"Señores," he said, "is there one here of sufficient expertness to cause this egg to stand on its end? If such a man be present, I challenge him to give us an exhibition of his skill."

The request produced a good deal of surprise; but a dozen immediately attempted the exploit, amid much laughter and many words. More than once, some young noble thought he had succeeded, but the instant his fingers quitted the egg, it rolled upon the table, as if in mockery of his awkwardness.

"By Saint Luke, Señor Almirante, but this notable achievement surpasseth our skill," cried Juan de Orbitello. "Here is the Conde de Llera, who hath slain so many Moors, and who hath even unhorsed Alonzo de Ojeda, in a tourney, can make nothing of his egg, in the way you mention."

"And yet it will no longer be difficult to him, or even to you, Señor, when the art shall be exposed."

Saying thus, Columbus tapped the smaller end of his egg lightly on the table, when, the shell being forced in, it possessed a base on which it stood firmly and without tremour. A murmur of applause followed this rebuke, and the Lord of Orbitello was fain to shrink back into an insignificance, from which it would have been better for him never to have emerged. At this precise instant a royal page spoke to the admiral, and then passed on to the seat of Don Luis de Bobadilla.

"I am summoned hastily to the presence of the queen, Lord Cardinal," observed the admiral, "and look to your Grace for an apology for my withdrawing. The business is of weight, by the manner of the message, and you will pardon my now quitting the board, though it seem early."

The usual reply was made; and, bowed to the door by his host and all present, Columbus quitted the room. Almost at the same instant, he was followed by the Conde de Llera.

"Whither goest thou, in this hurry, Don Luis?" demanded the admiral, as the other joined him. "Art thou in so great haste to quit a banquet such as Spain hath not often seen, except in the palaces of her kings?"

"By San Iago! nor there, neither, Señor," answered the young man, gaily, "if King Ferdinand's board be taken as the sample. But I quit this goodly company in obedience to an order of Doña Isabella, who hath suddenly summoned me to her royal presence."

"Then, Señor Conde, we go together, and are like to meet on the same errand. I, too, am hastening to the apartments of the queen."

"It gladdens my heart to hear this, Señor, as I know of but one subject on which a common summons should be sent to us. This affair toucheth on my suit, and, doubtless, you will be required to speak of my bearing in the voyage."

"My mind and my time have been so much occupied, of late, with public cares, Luis, that I have not had an occasion to question you of this. How fareth the Lady of Valverde, and when will she deign to reward thy constancy and love."

"Señor, I would I could answer the last of these questions with greater certainty, and the first with a lighter heart. Since my return I have seen Doña Mercedes but thrice; and though she was all gentleness and truth, my suit for the consummation of my happiness hath been coldly and evasively answered by my aunt. Her Highness is to be consulted, it would seem; and the tumult produced by the success of the voyage hath so much occupied her, that there hath been no. leisure to wait on trifles such as those that lead to the felicity of a wanderer like myself."

"Then is it like, Luis, that we are indeed summoned on this very affair; else, why should thou and I be brought together in a manner so unusual and so sudden."

Our hero was not displeased to fancy this, and he entered the apartments of the queen with a step as elastic, and a mien as bright, as if he had come to wed his love.

The Admiral of the Ocean Sea, as Columbus was now publicly called, had not long to wait in ante-chambers, and, ere many minutes, he and his companions were ushered into the presence.

Isabella received her guests in private, there being no one in attendance but the Marchioness of Moya, Mercedes, and Ozema. The first glances of their eyes told Columbus and Luis that all was not right. Every countenance denoted that its owner was endeavouring to maintain a calmness that was assumed. The queen herself was serene and dignified, it is true, but her brow was thoughtful, her eye melancholy, and her cheek slightly flushed. As for Doña Beatriz, sorrow and indignation struggled in her expressive face, and Luis saw, with concern, that her look was averted from him in a way she always adopted when he had seriously incurred her displeasure. Mercedes's lips were pale as death, though a bright spot, like vermilion, was stationary on each cheek; her eyes were downcast, and all her mien was humbled and timid. Ozema alone seemed perfectly natural: still, her glances were quick and anxious, though a gleam of joy danced in her eyes, and even a slight exclamation of delight escaped her, as she beheld Luis, whom she had seen but once since her arrival in Barcelona, already near a month.

Isabella advanced a step or two, to meet the admiral, and when the last would have kneeled, she hurriedly prevented the act by giving him her hand to kiss.

"Not so—not so—Lord Admiral," exclaimed the queen; "this is homage unsuited to thy high rank and eminent services. If we are thy sovereigns, so are we also thy friends. I fear my lord cardinal will scarce pardon the orders I sent him, seeing that it hath deprived him of thy society somewhat sooner than he may have expected."

"His Eminence, and all his goodly company, have that to muse on, Señora, that may yet occupy them some time," returned Columbus, smiling in his grave manner; "doubtless, they will less miss me than at an ordinary time. Were it otherwise, both I, and this young count, would not scruple to quit even a richer banquet, to obey the summons of your Highness."

"I doubt it not, Señor, but I have desired to see thee,

this night, on a matter of private, rather than of public concernment. Doña Beatriz, here, hath made known to me the presence at court, as well as the history of this fair being, who giveth one an idea so much more exalted of thy vast discoveries, that I marvel she should ever have been concealed. Know'st thou her rank, Don Christopher, and the circumstances that have brought her to Spain?"

"Señora, I do; in part through my own observation, and in part from the statements of Don Luis de Bobadilla. I consider the rank of the lady Ozema to be less than royal, and more than noble, if our opinions will allow us to imagine a condition between the two; though it must always be remembered that Hayti is not Castile; the one being benighted under the cloud of heathenism, and the other existing in the sunshine of the church and civilization."

"Nevertheless, Don Christopher, station is station, and the rights of birth are not impaired by the condition of a country. Although it hath pleased him already, and will still further please the head of the church, to give us rights, in our characters of Christian princes, over these caciques of India, there is nothing unusual or novel in the fact. The relation between the suzerain and the lieges is ancient and well established; and instances are not wanting, in which powerful monarchs have held certain of their States by this tenure, while others have come direct from God. In this view, I feel disposed to consider the Indian lady as more than noble, and have directed her to be treated accordingly. There remaineth only to relate the circumstances that have brought her to Spain."

"These can better come from Don Luis than from me, Señora; he being most familiar with the events."

"Nay, Señor, I would hear them from thine own lips. I am already possessed of the substance of the Conde de Llera's story."

Columbus looked both surprised and pained, but he did not hesitate about complying with the queen's request.

"Hayti hath its greater and its lesser princes, or caciques, your Highness," he added, "the last paying a species of homage, and owing a certain allegiance to the first, as hath been said—"

"Thou see'st, daughter-marchioness, this is but a natu-

ral order of government, prevailing equally in the East and in the West!"

"Of the first of these was Guacanagari, of whom I have already related so much to your Highness," continued Columbus, "and of the last, Mattinao, the brother of this lady. Don Luis visited the cacique Mattinao, and was present at an inroad of Caonabo, a celebrated Carib chief, who would fain have made a wife of her who now stands in this illustrious presence. The Conde conducted himself like a gallant Castilian cavalier, routed the foe, saved the lady, and brought her in triumph to the ships. Here it was determined she should visit Spain, both as a means of throwing more lustre on the triumph of the two crowns, and of removing her, for a season, from the attempts of the Carib, who is too powerful and warlike to be withstood by a race as gentle as that of Mattinao's."

"This is well, Señor, and what I have already heard; but how happeneth it, that Ozema did not appear with the rest of thy train, in the public reception of the town?"

"It was the wish of Don Luis it should be otherwise, and I consented that he and his charge should sail privately from Palos, with the expectation of meeting me in Barcelona. We both thought the lady Ozema too superior to her companions, to be exhibited to rude eyes as a spectacle."

"There was delicacy, if there were not prudence in the arrangement," the queen observed a little drily. "Then the lady Ozema hath been some weeks solely in the care of the Conde de Llera?"

"I so esteem it, your Highness, except as she hath been placed under the guardianship of the Marchioness of Moya."

"Was this altogether discreet, Don Christopher, or as one prudent as thou should'st have consented to?"

"Señora!" exclaimed Luis, unable to restrain his feelings longer.

"Forbear, young sir," commanded the queen. "I shall have occasion to question thee presently, when thou may'st have a need for all thy readiness, to give the fitting answers. Doth not thy discretion rebuke thy indiscretion in this matter, Lord Admiral?"

"Señora, the question, like its motive, is altogether new

to me; I have the utmost reliance on the honour of the Count, and then did I know that his heart hath long been given to the fairest and worthiest damsel of Spain; besides, my mind hath been so much occupied with the grave subjects of your Highness' interests, that it hath had but little opportunity to dwell on minor things."

"I believe thee, Señor, and thy pardon is secure. Still, for one so experienced, it was a sore indiscretion to trust to the constancy of a fickle heart, when placed in the body of a light-minded and truant boy. And, now, Conde de Llera, I have that to say to thee, which thou may'st find it difficult to answer. Thou assentest to all that hath hitherto been said?"

"Certainly, Señora. Don Christopher can have no motive to misstate, even were he capable of the meanness. I trust our house hath not been remarkable in Spain, for recreant and false cavaliers."

"In that I fully agree. If thy house hath had the misfortune to produce one untrue and recreant heart, it hath the glory"—glancing at her friend—"of producing others that might equal the constancy of the most heroic minds of antiquity. The lustre of the name of Bobadilla doth not altogether depend on the fidelity and truth of its head —nay, hear me, sir, and speak only when thou art ready to answer my questions. Thy thoughts, of late, have been bent on matrimony?"

"Señora, I confess it. Is it an offence to dream of the honourable termination of a suit that hath been long urged, and which I had dared to hope was finally about to receive your own royal approbation?"

"It is then as I feared, Beatriz!" exclaimed the queen; "and this benighted but lovely being hath been deceived by the mockery of a marriage; for no subject of Castile would dare thus to speak of wedlock, in my presence, with the consciousness that his vows had actually and lawfully been given to another. Both the church and the prince would not be thus braved, by even the greatest profligate of Spain!"

"Señora, your Highness speaketh most cruelly, even while you speak in riddles!" cried Luis. "May I presume to ask if I am meant in these severe remarks?"

"Of whom else should we be speaking, or to whom else allude? Thou must have the inward consciousness, unprincipled boy, of all thy unworthiness; and yet thou darest thus to brave thy sovereign—nay, to brave that suffering and angelic girl, with a mien as bold as if sustained by the purest innocence!"

"Señora, I am no angel, myself, however willing to admit Doña Mercedes to be one; neither am I a saint of perfect purity, perhaps — in a word, I am Luis de Bobadilla — but as far from deserving these reproaches, as from deserving the crown of martyrdom. Let me humbly demand my offence?"

"Simply that thou hast either cruelly deceived, by a feigned marriage, this uninstructed and confiding Indian princess, or hast insolently braved thy sovereign with the professions of a desire to wed another, with thy faith actually plighted at the altar, to another. Of which of these crimes thou art guilty, thou knowest best, thyself."

"And thou, my aunt — thou, Mercedes — dost thou, too, believe me capable of this?"

"I fear it is but too true," returned the marchioness, coldly; "the proof is such that none but an Infidel could deny belief."

"Mercedes?"

"No, Luis," answered the generous girl, with a warmth and feeling that broke down the barriers of all conventional restraint—"I do not think thee base as this—I do not think thee base at all; merely unable to restrain thy wandering inclinations. I know thy heart too well, and thine honour too well, to suppose aught more than a weakness that thou would'st fain subdue, but canst not."

"God and the Holy Virgin be blessed for this!" cried the count, who had scarcely breathed while his mistress was speaking. "Anything but thy entertaining so low an opinion of me, may be borne!"

"There must be an end of this, Beatriz; and I see no surer means, than by proceeding at once to the facts," said the queen. "Come hither, Ozema, and let thy testimony set this matter at rest, for ever."

The young Indian, who comprehended Spanish much better than she expressed herself in the language, although

far from having even a correct understanding of all that was said, immediately complied, her whole soul being engrossed with what was passing, while her intelligence was baffled in its attempts thoroughly to comprehend it. Mercedes alone had noted the workings of her countenance, as Isabella reproved, or Luis made his protestations, and they were such as completely denoted the interest she felt in our hero.

"Ozema," resumed the queen, speaking slowly, and with deliberate distinctness, in order that the other might get the meaning of her words as she proceeded. "Speak—art thou wedded to Luis de Bobadilla, or not?"

"Ozema Luis's wife," answered the girl, laughing and blushing. "Luis Ozema's husband."

"This is plain as words can make it, Don Christopher, and is no more than she hath already often affirmed, on my anxious and repeated inquiries. How and when did Luis wed thee, Ozema?"

"Luis wed Ozema with religion — with Spaniard's religion. Ozema wed Luis with love and duty — with Hayti manner."

"This is extraordinary, Señora," observed the admiral, "and I would gladly look into it. Have I your Highness's permission to inquire into the affair, myself?"

"Do as thou wilt, Señor," returned the queen, coldly. "My own mind is satisfied, and it behoveth my justice to act speedily."

"Conde de Llera, dost thou admit, or dost thou deny, that thou art the husband of the lady Ozema?" demanded Columbus, gravely.

"Lord Admiral, I deny it altogether. Neither have I wedded her, nor hath the thought of so doing, with any but Mercedes, ever crossed my mind."

This was said firmly, and with the open frankness that formed a principal charm in the young man's manner.

"Hast thou, then, wronged her, and given her a right to think that thou didst mean wedlock?"

"I have not. Mine own sister would not have been more respected than hath Ozema been respected by me, as is shown by the fact that I have hastened to place her in the

care of my dear aunt, and in the company of Doña Mercedes."

"This seemeth reasonable, Señora; for man hath ever that much respect for virtue in your sex, that he hesitateth to offend it even in his levities."

"In opposition to all these protestations, and to so much fine virtue, Señor Colon, we have the simple declaration of one untutored in deception—a mind too simple to deceive; and of a rank and hopes that would render such a fraud as unnecessary as it would be unworthy. Beatriz, thou dost agree with me, and cannot find an apology for this recreant knight, even though he were once the pride of thy house?"

"Señora, I know not. Whatever may have been the failings and weaknesses of the boy — and heaven it knows that they have been many — deception and untruth have never made a part. I have even ascribed the manner in which he hath placed the princess in my immediate care, to the impulses of a heart that did not wish to conceal the errors of the head, and to the expectation that her presence in my family might sooner bring me to a knowledge of the truth. I could wish that the lady Ozema might be questioned more closely, in order that we make certain of not being under the delusion of some strange error."

"This is right," observed Isabella, whose sense of justice ever inclined her to make the closest examination into the merits of every case that required her decision. "The fortune of a grandee depends on the result, and it is meet he enjoy all fair means of vindicating himself from so heinous an offence. Sir Count, thou canst, therefore, question her, in our presence, touching all proper grounds of inquiry."

"Señora, it would ill become a knight to put himself in array against a lady, and she, too, of the character and habits of this stranger," answered Luis, proudly; colouring as he spoke, with the consciousness that Ozema was utterly unable to conceal her predilection in his favour. "If such an office is, indeed, necessary, its functions would better become another."

"As the stern duty of punishing must fall on me," the queen calmly observed, "I will then assume this unpleasant office. Señor Almirante, we may not shrink from any ob-

ligation that brings us nearer to the greatest attribute of God, his justice. Princess, thou hast said that Don Luis hath wedded thee, and that thou considerest thyself his wife. When and where didst thou meet him before a priest?"

So many attempts had been made to convert Ozema to Christianity, that she was more familiar with the terms connected with religion than with any other part of the language, though her mind was a confused picture of imaginary obligations, and of mystical qualities. Like all who are not addicted to abstractions, her piety was more connected with forms than with principles, and she was better disposed to admit the virtue of the ceremonies of the church than the importance of its faith. The question of the queen was understood, and, therefore, it was answered without guile, or a desire to deceive.

"Luis wed Ozema with Christian's cross," she said, pressing to her heart the holy emblem that the young man had given to her in a moment of great peril, and in a manner the reader already knows. "Luis think he about to die — Ozema think she about to die — both wish to die man and wife, and Luis wed with the cross, like good Spanish Christian. Ozema wed Luis in her heart, like Hayti lady, in her own country."

"Here is some mistake—some sad mistake, growing out of the difference of language and customs," observed the admiral. "Don Luis hath not been guilty of this deception. I witnessed the offering of that cross, which was made at sea, during a tempest, and in a way to impress me favourably with the count's zeal in behalf of a benighted soul. There was no wedlock there; nor could any, but one who hath confounded our usages, through ignorance, imagine more than the bestowal of a simple emblem, that it was hoped might be useful, in extremity, to one that had not enjoyed the advantages of baptism and the church's offices."

"Don Luis, dost thou confirm this statement, and also assert that thy gift was made solely with this object?" asked the queen.

"Señora, it is most true. Death was staring us in the face, and I felt that this poor wanderer, who had trusted herself to our care, with the simple confidence of a child,

needed some consolation; none seemed so meet, at the moment, as that memorial of our blessed Redeemer, and of our own redemption. To me it seemed to be the preservative next to baptism."

"Hast thou never stood before a priest with her, nor in any manner abused her guileless simplicity?"

"Señora, it is not my nature to deceive, and every weakness of which I have been guilty in connexion with Ozema shall be revealed. Her beauty and her winning manners speak for themselves, as doth her resemblance to Doña Mercedes. The last, greatly inclined me to her, and, had not my heart been altogether another's, it would have been my pride to make the princess my wife. But we met too late for that; and even the resemblance led to comparisons, in which one, educated in infidelity and ignorance, must necessarily suffer. That I have had moments of tenderness for Ozema, I will own; but that they ever supplanted, or came near supplanting, my love for Mercedes, I do deny. If I have any fault to answer for, to the lady Ozema, it is because I have not always been able to suppress the feelings that her likeness to the Doña Mercedes, and her own ingenuous simplicity — chiefly the former — have induced. Never otherwise, in speech or act, have I offended against her."

"This soundeth upright and true, Beatriz. Thou knowest the count better than I, and can easier say how far we ought to confide in these explanations."

"My life on their truth, my beloved mistress! Luis is no hypocrite, and I rejoice — oh! how exultingly do I rejoice! — at finding him able to give this fair vindication of his conduct. Ozema, who hath heard of our form of wedlock, and hath seen our devotion to the cross, hath mistaken her position, as she hath my nephew's feelings, and supposed herself a wife, when a Christian girl would not have been so cruelly deceived."

"This really hath a seeming probability, Señores," continued the queen, with her sex's sensitiveness to her sex's delicacy of sentiment, not to say to her sex's rights — "This toucheth of a lady's — nay, of a princess' feelings, and must not be treated of openly. It is proper that any further explanations should be made only among females;

and I trust to your honour, as cavaliers and nobles, that what hath this night been said never be spoken of, amid the revels of men. The lady Ozema shall be my care; and, Count of Llera, thou shalt know my final decision to-morrow, concerning Doña Mercedes and thyself."

As this was said with a royal, as well as with a womanly, dignity, no one presumed to demur, but, making the customary reverences, Columbus and our hero left the presence. It was late before the queen quitted Ozema, but what passed in this interview will better appear in the scenes that are still to be given.

CHAPTER XIV.

"When sinking low the sufferer wan
Beholds no arm outstretch'd to save,
Fair, as the bosom of the swan
That rises graceful o'er the wave,
I 've seen your breast with pity heave,
And *therefore* love you, sweet Genevieve!"

COLERIDGE.

WHEN Isabella found herself alone with Ozema and Mercedes (for she chose that the last should be present), she entered on the subject of the marriage with the tenderness of a sensitive and delicate mind, but with a sincerity that rendered further error impossible. The result showed how naturally and cruelly the young Indian beauty had deceived herself. Ardent, confiding, and accustomed to be considered the object of general admiration among her own people, Ozema had fancied that her own inclinations had been fully answered by the young man. From the first moment they met, with the instinctive quickness of a woman, she perceived that she was admired, and, as she gave way to the excess of her own feelings, it was almost a necessary consequence of the communications she held with Luis, that she should think they were reciprocated. The very want

of language in words, by compelling a substitution of one in looks and acts, contributed to the mistake; and, it will be remembered, that, if Luis's constancy did not actually waver, it had been sorely tried. The false signification she attached to the word "Mercedes," largely aided in the delusion, and it was completed by the manly tenderness and care with which our hero treated her on all occasions. Even the rigid decorum that Luis invariably observed, and the severe personal respect which he maintained towards his charge, had their effect on her feelings; for, wild and unsophisticated as had been her training, the deep and unerring instinct of the feeble, told her the nature of the power she was wielding over the strong.

Then came the efforts to give her some ideas of religion, and the deep and lamentable mistakes which, imperfectly explained, and worse understood subtleties, left on her plastic mind. Ozema believed that the Spaniards worshipped the cross. She saw it put foremost in all public ceremonies, knelt to, and apparently appealed to, on every occasion that called for an engagement more solemn than usual. Whenever a knight made a vow, he kissed the cross of his sword-hilt. The mariners regarded it with reverence, and even the admiral had caused one to be erected as a sign of his right to the territory that had been ceded to him by Guacanagari. In a word, to her uninstructed imagination, it seemed as if the cross were used as a pledge for the fidelity of all engagements. Often had she beheld and admired the beautiful emblem worn by our hero; and, as the habits of her own people required the exchange of pledges of value, as a proof of wedlock, she fancied, when she received this much-valued jewel, that she received the sign that our hero took her for a wife, at a moment when death was about to part them for ever. Further than this, her simplicity and affections did not induce her to reason, or to believe.

It was an hour before Isabella elicited all these facts and feelings from Ozema, though the latter clearly wished to conceal nothing; in truth, had nothing to conceal. The painful part of the duty remained to be discharged. It was to undeceive the confiding girl, and to teach her the hard lesson of bitterness that followed. This was done, however, and the queen, believing it best to remove all delusion

on the subject, finally succeeded in causing her to understand that, before the count had ever seen herself, his affections were given to Mercedes, who was, in truth, his betrothed wife. Nothing could have been gentler, or more femininely tender, than the manner in which the queen made her communication; but the blow struck home, and Isabella, herself, trembled at the consequences of her own act. Never before had she witnessed the outbreaking of feeling in a mind so entirely unsophisticated, and the images of what she then saw, haunted her troubled slumbers for many succeeding nights.

As for Columbus and our hero, they were left mainly in the dark, as to what had occurred, for the following week. It is true, Luis received a kind and encouraging note from his aunt, the succeeding day, and a page of Mercedes's silently placed in his hand the cross that he had so long worn; but, beyond this, he was left to his own conjectures. The moment for explanation, however, arrived, and the young man received a summons to the apartment of the marchioness.

Luis did not, as he expected, meet his aunt on reaching the saloon, which he found empty. Questioning the page who had been his usher, he was desired to wait for the appearance of some one to receive him. Patience was not a conspicuous virtue in our hero's character, and he excited himself by pacing the room, for near half an hour, ere he discovered a single sign that his visit was remembered. Just as he was about to summon an attendant, however, again to announce his presence, a door was slowly opened, and Mercedes stood before him.

The first glance that the young man cast upon his betrothed, told him that she was suffering under deep mental anxiety. The hand which he eagerly raised to his lips trembled, and the colour came and went on her cheeks, in a way to show that she was nearly overcome. Still she rejected the glass of water that he offered, putting it aside with a faint smile, and motioning her lover to take a chair, while she calmly placed herself on a *tabouret*—one of the humble seats she was accustomed to occupy in the presence of the queen.

"I have asked for this interview, Don Luis," Mercedes

commenced, as soon as she had given herself time to command her feelings, "in order that there may no longer be any reasons for mistaking our feelings and wishes. You have been suspected of having married the Lady Ozema; and there was a moment when you stood on the verge of destruction, through the displeasure of Doña Isabella."

"But, blessed Mercedes, *you* never imputed to me this act of deception and unfaithfulness?"

"I told you truth, Señor—for that I knew you too well. I felt certain that, whenever Luis de Bobadilla had made up his mind to the commission of such a step, he would also have the manliness and courage to avow it. *I* never, for an instant, believed that you had wedded the princess."

"Why, then, those cold and averted looks?—eyes that sought the floor, rather than the meeting of glances that love delights in; and a manner which, if it hath not absolutely displayed aversion, hath at least manifested a reserve and distance that I had never expected to witness from thee to me?"

Mercedes's colour changed, and she made no answer for a minute, during which little interval she had doubts of her ability to carry out her own purpose. Rallying her courage, however, the discourse was continued in the same manner as before.

"Hear me, Don Luis," she resumed, "for my history will not be long. When you left Spain, at my suggestion, to enter on this great voyage, you loved *me*—of that grateful recollection no earthly power can deprive me! Yes, you then loved *me*, and me *only*. We parted, with our troth plighted to each other; and not a day went by, during your absence, that I did not pass hours on my knees, beseeching heaven in behalf of the admiral and his followers."

"Beloved Mercedes! it is not surprising that success crowned our efforts; such an intercessor could not fail to be heard!"

"I entreat you, sir, to hear me. Until the eventful day which brought the tidings of your return, no Spanish wife could have felt more concern for him on whom she had placed all her hopes, than I felt for you. To me, the future was bright and filled with hope, if the present was loaded with fear and doubt. The messenger who reached the

court, first opened my eyes to the sad realities of the world, and taught me the hard lesson the young are ever slow to learn—that of disappointment. It was then I first heard of Ozema—of your admiration of her beauty—your readiness to sacrifice your life in her behalf!"

"Holy Luke! Did that vagabond, Sancho, dare to wound thy ear, Mercedes, with any insinuations that touched the strength or the constancy of my love for thee!"

"He related nought but the truth, Luis, and blame him not. I was prepared for some calamity by his report, and I bless God that it came on me by such slow degrees, and with the means of preparation to bear it. When I beheld Ozema, I no longer wondered at thy change of feeling,—scarce blamed it. Her beauty, I do think, thou might'st have withstood; but her unfeigned devotion to thyself, her innocence, her winning simplicity, and her modest joyousness and nature, are sufficient to win a lover from any Spanish maiden—"

"Mercedes!"

"Nay, Luis, I have told thee, that I blame thee not. It is better that the blow come now, than later, when I should not be able to bear it. There is something which tells me that, as a wife, I should sink beneath the weight of blighted affections; but, now, there are open to me the convent and the espousals of the Son of God. Do not interrupt me, Luis," she added, smiling sweetly, but with an effort that denoted how difficult it was to seem easy. "I have to struggle severely to speak at all, and to an argument I am altogether unequal. Thou hast not been able to control thy affections; and to the strange novelties that have surrounded Ozema, as well as to her winning ingenuousness, I owe my loss, and she oweth her gain. It is the will of Heaven, and I strive to think it is to my everlasting advantage. Had I really wedded thee, the tenderness that is even now swelling in my heart—I wish not to conceal it—might have grown to such a strength as to supplant the love I owe to God; it is, therefore, doubtless, better as it is. If happiness on earth is not to be my lot, I shall secure happiness hereafter. Nay, all happiness here will not be lost; I can still pray for thee, as well as for myself—and thou and

Ozema, of all earthly beings, will ever be uppermost in my thoughts."

"This is so wonderful, Mercedes — so cruel—so unreasonable and so unjust, that I cannot credit my ears!"

"I have said that I blame thee not. The beauty and frankness of Ozema are more than sufficient to justify thee, for men yield to the senses, rather than to the heart, in bestowing their love. Then—" Mercedes blushed crimson as she continued—"a Haytian maid may innocently use a power, that it would ill become a Christian damsel to employ. And, now, we will come to facts that press for a decision. Ozema hath been ill—is still ill—dangerously so as her Highness and my guardian believe—even as the physicians say,—but it is in thy power, Luis, to raise her, as it might be, from the grave. See her—say but the word that will confer happiness—tell her, if thou hast not yet wedded her after the manner of Spain, that thou wilt—nay, let one of the Holy Priests, who are in constant attendance on her, to prepare the way for baptism, perform the ceremony this very morning, and we shall presently see the princess, again, the smiling, radiant, joyous creature she was, when thou first placed her in our care."

"And this thou say'st to me, Mercedes, calmly and deliberately, as if thy words express thy very wishes and feelings!"

"Calmly I may *seem* to say it, Luis," answered our heroine in a smothered tone, "and deliberately I *do* say it. Marry me, loving another better, thou canst not; and why not then follow whither thy heart leadeth. The dowry of the princess shall not be small, for the convent recluse hath little need of gold, and none of lands."

Luis gazed earnestly at the enthusiastic girl, who in his eyes never appeared more lovely; then rising he paced the room for three or four minutes like one who wished to keep down mental agony by physical action. When he had obtained a proper command of himself, he returned to his seat, and taking the unresisting hand of Mercedes, he replied to her extraordinary proposal.

"Watching over the sick couch of thy friend, and too much brooding on this subject, love, hath impaired thy judgment. Ozema hath no hold on my heart, in the way

thou fanciest—never had, beyond a passing and truant inclination"—

"Ah! Luis, those 'passing and truant inclinations.'—None such," pressing both her hands on her own heart—"have ever found a place here!"

"Thy education and mine, Mercedes—thy habits and mine—lady, thy nature and the ruder elements of mine, are not, *cannot* be the same. Were they so, I should not worship thee as I now do. But didst thou not exist, the certainty that I should wed Ozema, would not give me happiness—but thou existing, and beloved as thou art, it would entail on me a misery that even my buoyant nature could not endure. In no case can I ever be the husband of the Indian."

Although a gleam of happiness illumined the face of Mercedes for a moment, her high principles and pure intentions soon suppressed the momentary and unbidden triumph, and, even with a reproving manner, she made her answer.

"Is this just to Ozema?—Hath not her simplicity been deluded by those 'passing and truant inclinations,' and doth not honour require that thy acts now redeem the pledges that have been given by, at least, thy manner?"

"Mercedes—beloved girl—hearken to me. Thou must know, that, with all my levities and backslidings, I am no coxcomb. Never hath my manner said aught that the heart did not confirm, and never hath the heart been drawn towards any but thee. In this, is the great distinction that I make between thee and all others of thy sex. Ozema's is not the only form, her's are not the only charms that may have caught a truant glance from my eyes, or extorted some unmeaning and bootless admiration, but thou, love, art enshrined here, and seemest already a part of myself. Didst thou know how often thy image hath proved a monitor stronger than conscience; on how many occasions the remembrance of thy virtues and thy affections hath prevailed, when even duty, and religion, and early lessons would have been forgotten, thou would'st understand the difference between the love I bear *thee*, and what thou hast so tauntingly repeated as truant and passing inclinations."

"Luis, I ought not to listen to these alluring words, which come from a goodness of heart that would spare me

present pain, only to make my misery in the end the deeper. If thou hast never felt otherwise, why was the cross that I gave thee at parting, bestowed on another?"

"Mercedes, thou know'st not the fearful circumstances under which I parted with that cross. Death was staring us in the face, and I gave it as a symbol that might aid a heathen soul in its extremity. That the gift, or rather that the thing I lent, was mistaken for a pledge of matrimony, is an unhappy misconception, that your own knowledge of Christian usages will tell you I could not foresee; otherwise I might now claim thee for my wife, in consequence of having first bestowed it on me."

"Ah! Luis; when I gave thee that cross, I did wish to be understood as plighting my faith to thee for ever!"

"And when thou didst send it back to me, now within the week, how was it thy wish to be understood?"

"I sent it to thee, Luis, in a moment of reviving hope, and by the order of the queen. Her Highness is now firmly thy friend, and would fain see us united, but for the melancholy condition of Ozema, to whom all has been explained—all, as I fear, except the real state of thy feelings towards us both."

"Cruel girl!—Am I then never to be believed—never again to be happy? I swear to thee, dearest Mercedes, that thou alone hast my whole heart—that with thee, I could be contented in a hovel, and that without thee, I should be miserable on a throne. Thou wilt believe this, when thou see'st me a wretch, wandering the earth, reckless alike of hopes and objects, perhaps of character, because thou alone canst make me, and keep me the man I ought to be. Bethink thee, Mercedes, of the influence thou canst have—must have—*wilt* have on one of my temperament and passions. I have long looked upon thee as my guardian angel, one that can mould me to thy will, and rule me when all others fail. With thee—the impatience produced by thy doubts excepted—am I not ever tractable and gentle? Hath Doña Beatriz ever exercised a tithe of my power over me, and hast thou ever failed to tame even my wildest and rashest humours?"

"Luis—Luis—no one that knew it, ever doubted of thy heart!" Mercedes paused, and the working of her counte-

nance proved that the earnest sincerity of her lover had already shaken her doubts of his constancy. Still her mind reverted to the scenes of the voyage, and her imagination pourtrayed the couch of the stricken Ozema. After a minute's delay, she proceeded in a low, humbled tone—"I will not deny that it is soothing to my heart to hear this language, to which I fear I listen too readily," she said. "Still I find it difficult to believe that thou canst ever forget one who hath even braved the chances of death in order to shelter thy body from the arrows of thy foes!"

"Believe not this, beloved girl; thou would'st have done that thyself, in Ozema's place, and so I shall ever consider it."

"I should have the wish, Luis," Mercedes continued, her eyes suffused with tears, "but I might not have the power!"

"Thou would'st—thou would'st—I know thee too well to doubt it."

"I could envy Ozema the occasion, were it not sinful! I fear thou wilt think of this, when thy mind shall have tired with attractions that have lost their novelty."

"Thou would'st not only have done it, but thou would'st have done it far better. Ozema, moreover, was exposed in her own quarrel, whilst thou would'st have exposed thyself in mine."

Mercedes again paused, and appeared to muse deeply. Her eyes had brightened under the soothing asseverations of her lover, and, spite of the generous self-devotion with which she had determined to sacrifice all her own hopes to what she had imagined would make her lover happy, the seductive influence of requited affection was fast resuming its power.

"Come with me, then, Luis, and behold Ozema," she at length continued. "When thou see'st her, in her present state, thou wilt better understand thine own intentions. I ought not to have suffered thee thus to revive thy ancient feelings in a private interview, Ozema not being present; it is like forming a judgment on the hearing of only one side. And, Luis,"—her heightened colour, the effect of feeling, not of shame, rendered the girl surpassingly beautiful—"and, Luis, if thou should'st find reason to change thy language after visiting the princess, however hard I

may find it to be borne, thou wilt be certain of my forgiveness for all that hath passed, and of my prayers—"

Sobs interrupted Mercedes, and she stopped an instant to wipe away her tears, rejecting Luis's attempt to fold her in his arms, in order to console her, with a sensitive jealousy of the result; a feeling, however, in which delicacy had more weight than resentment. When she had dried her eyes, and otherwise removed the traces of her agitation, she led the way to the apartment of Ozema, where the presence of the young man was expected.

Luis started on entering the room; a little on perceiving that the queen and the admiral were present, and more at observing the inroads that disappointment had made on the appearance of Ozema. The colour of the latter was gone, leaving a deadly paleness in its place; her eyes possessed a brightness that seemed supernatural, and yet her weakness was so evident as to render it necessary to support her, in a half-recumbent posture, on pillows. An exclamation of unfeigned delight escaped her when she beheld our hero, and then she covered her face with both her hands, in childish confusion, as if ashamed at betraying the pleasure she felt. Luis behaved with manly propriety, for, though his conscience did not altogether escape a few twinges, at the recollection of the hours he had wasted in Ozema's society, and at the manner in which he had momentarily submitted to the influence of her beauty and seductive simplicity, on the whole he stood self-acquitted of any thing that might fairly be urged as a fault, and most of all, of any thought of being unfaithful to his first love, or of any design to deceive. He took the hand of the young Indian respectfully, and he kissed it with an openness and warmth that denoted brotherly tenderness and regard, rather than passion, or the emotion of a lover. Mercedes did not dare to watch his movements, but she observed the approving glance that the queen threw at her guardian, when he had approached the couch on which Ozema lay. This glance she interpreted into a sign that the count had acquitted himself in a manner favourable to her own interests.

"Thou findest the lady Ozema weak and changed," observed the queen, who alone would presume to break a silence that was already awkward. "We have been en-

deavouring to enlighten her simple mind on the subject of religion, and she hath, at length, consented to receive the holy sacrament of baptism. The Lord Archbishop is even now preparing for the ceremony in my oratory, and we have the blessed prospect of rescuing this one precious soul from perdition."

"Your Highness hath ever the good of all your people at heart," said Luis, bowing low to conceal the tears that the condition of Ozema had drawn from his eyes. "I fear this climate of ours ill agrees with the poor Haytians, generally, for I hear that the sick among them, at Seville and Palos, offer but little hope of recovery."

"Is this so, Don Christopher?"

"Señora, I believe it is only too true. Care hath been had, however, to their souls, as well as to their bodies, and Ozema is the last of her people, now in Spain, to receive the holy rite of Christian baptism."

"Señora," said the Marchioness, coming from the couch with surprise and concern in her countenance, "I fear our hopes are to be defeated after all! The lady Ozema hath just whispered me, that Luis and Mercedes must first be married in her presence, ere she will consent to be admitted within the pale of the church herself."

"This doth not denote the right spirit, Beatriz—and, yet, what can be done with a mind so little illuminated with the light from above. 'T is merely a passing caprice, and will be forgotten when the archbishop shall be ready."

"I think not, Señora. Never have I seen her so decided and clear. In common, we find her gentle and tractable, but this hath she thrice said, in a way to cause the belief of her perfect seriousness."

Isabella now advanced to the couch, and spoke long and soothingly to the invalid. In the meantime, the admiral conversed with the Marchioness, and Luis again approached our heroine. The evidences of emotion were plain in both, and Mercedes scarce breathed, not knowing what to expect. But a few low words soon brought an assurance that could not fail to bring happiness, spite of her generous efforts to feel for Ozema—that the heart of our hero was all her own. From this moment Mercedes dismissed every doubt, and she regarded Luis as had so long been her wont.

As is usual in the presence of royalty, the conversation was carried on in a low tone; and a quarter of an hour elapsed before a page announced that the oratory, or little chapel, was ready, opening a door that communicated directly with it, as he entered.

"This wilful girl persisteth, daughter-marchioness," said the queen, advancing from the side of the couch, "and I know not what to answer. It is cruel to deny her the offered means of grace, and yet it is a sudden and unseemly request to make of thy nephew and thy ward!"

"As for the first, dearest Señora, never distrust his forgiveness; though I much doubt the possibility of prevailing on Mercedes. Her very nature is made up of religion and female decorum."

"It is, indeed, scarce right to think of it. A Christian maiden should have time to prepare her spirit for the holy sacrament of marriage, by prayer."

"And yet, Señora, many wed without it! The time hath been when Don Ferdinand of Aragon and Doña Isabella might not have hesitated for such a purpose."

"That time never was, Beatriz. Thou hast a habit of making me look back to our days of trial and youth, whenever thou would'st urge on me some favourite but ill-considered wish of thine own. Dost really think thy ward would overlook the want of preparation and time?"

"I know not what she might feel disposed to overlook, Señora; but I do know that if there be one woman in Spain who is at all times ready in *spirit*, for the most sacred rites of the church, it is your Highness; and, if there be another, it is my ward."

"Go to—go to—good Beatriz; flattery sitteth ill on thee. None are always ready, and all have an unceasing need for watchfulness. Bid Doña Mercedes follow to my closet; I will converse with her on this subject. At least, there shall be no unfeminine and unseemly surprise."

So saying, the queen withdrew. She had hardly reached her closet, before our heroine entered, with a doubtful and timid step. As soon as her eyes met those of her sovereign, Mercedes burst into tears, and falling on her knees she again buried her face in the robe of Doña Isabella. This outbreak of feeling was soon subdued, however,

and then the girl stood erect, waiting her sovereign's pleasure.

"Daughter," commenced the queen, "I trust there is no longer any misapprehension between thee and the Conde de Llera. Thou knowest the views of thy guardian and myself, and mayest, in a matter like this, with safety defer to our cooler heads and greater experience. Don Luis loveth thee, and hath never loved the princess, though it would not be out of character, did an impetuous young man, who hath been much exposed to the temptation, betray some transient and passing feeling towards one of so much nature and beauty."

"Luis hath admitted all, Señora: inconstant he hath never been, though he may have had his weaknesses."

"'*T* is a hard lesson to learn, child, even in this stage of thy life," said the queen, gravely; "but it would have been harder were it deferred until the nearer tenderness of a wife had superseded the impulses of the girl. Thou hast heard the opinions of the learned; there is little hope that the princess Ozema can long survive."

"Ah! Señora, 't is a cruel fate! To die among strangers, in the flower of her beauty, and with a heart crushed by the weight of unrequited love!"

"And yet, Mercedes, if Heaven open on her awaking eyes, when the last earthly scene is over, the transition will be most blessed; and they who mourn her loss, would do wiser to rejoice. One so youthful, and so innocent; whose pure mind hath been laid bare to us, as it might be, and which we have found wanting in nothing beside the fruits of a pious instruction, can have little to apprehend on the score of personal errors. All that is required for such a being, is to place her within the covenant of God's grace, by obtaining the rite of baptism, and there is not a bishop of the church that could depart with brighter hopes for the future."

"That holy office is my lord archbishop about to administer, as I hear, Señora."

"*That* somewhat dependeth on thee, daughter. Listen, and be not hasty in thy decision, which may touch on the security of a human soul."

The queen now related to Mercedes the romantic request

of Ozema, placing it before her listener in terms so winning and gentle, that it produced less surprise and alarm than she herself had anticipated.

"Doña Beatriz hath a proposal that may, at first, appear plausible, but which reflection will not sanction. Her design was to cause the count actually to wed Ozema"—Mercedes started, and turned pale—"in order that the last hours of the young stranger might be soothed by the consciousness of being the wife of the man she idolized; but I have found serious objections to the scheme. What is thy opinion, daughter?"

"Señora, could I believe—as lately I did, but now do not—that Luis had such a preference for the princess, as might lead him, in the end, to the happiness of that mutual affection without which wedlock must be a curse instead of a blessing, I would be the last to object; nay, I think I could even beg the boon of your Highness on my knees, for she who truly loveth can only seek the felicity of its object. But, I am assured the count hath not the affection for the lady Ozema that is necessary to this end; and would it not be profane, Señora, to receive the church's sacraments under vows that the heart not only does not answer to, but against which it is actually struggling?"

"Excellent girl! These are precisely my own views, and in this manner have I answered the marchioness. The rites of the church may not be trifled with, and we are bound to submit to sorrows that may be inflicted, after all, for our eternal good; though it be harder to bear those of others than to bear our own. It remaineth only to decide on this whim of Ozema's, and to say if thou wilt now be married, in order that she may be baptized."

Notwithstanding the devotedness of feeling with which our heroine loved Luis, it required a strong struggle with her habits and her sense of propriety to take this great step so suddenly, and with so little preparation. The wishes of the queen, however, prevailed; for Isabella felt a deep responsibility on her own soul, in letting the stranger depart without being brought within the pale of the church. When Mercedes consented, she dispatched a messenger to the marchioness, and then she and her companion both knelt, and passed near an hour together, in the spiritual

exercises that were usual to the occasion. In this mood, did these two pure-minded females, without a thought to the vanities of the toilet, but with every attention to the mental preparations of which the case admitted, present themselves at the door of the royal chapel, through which Ozema had just been carried, still stretched on her couch. The marchioness had caused a white veil to be thrown over the head of Mercedes, and a few proper but slight alterations had been made in her attire, out of habitual deference to the altar and its ministers.

About a dozen persons, deemed worthy of confidence, were present, already; and just as the bride and bridegroom were about to take their places, Don Ferdinand hastily entered, carrying in his hand some papers which he had been obliged to cease examining, in order to comply with the wishes of his royal consort. The king was a dignified prince; and when it suited him, no sovereign enacted his part more gracefully or in better taste. Motioning the archbishop to pause, he directed Luis to kneel. Throwing over the shoulder of the young man the collar of one of his own orders, he said —

"Now, arise, noble sir, and ever do thy duty to thy Heavenly Master, as thou hast of late discharged it towards us."

Isabella rewarded her husband, for this act of grace, by an approving smile, and the ceremony immediately proceeded. In the usual time, our hero and heroine were pronounced man and wife, and the solemn rites were ended. Mercedes felt, in the warm pressure with which Luis held her to his heart, that she now understood him; and, for a blissful instant, Ozema was forgotten, in the fulness of her own happiness. Columbus had given away the bride, an office that the king assigned to him, though he stood at the bridegroom's side himself, with a view to do him honour, and even so far condescended as to touch the canopy that was held above the heads of the new-married couple. But, Isabella kept aloof, placing herself near the couch of Ozema, whose features she watched throughout the ceremony. She had felt no occasion for public manifestations of interest in the bride, their feelings having so lately been poured out together in dear and private communion. The

congratulations were soon over, and, then, Don Ferdinand, and all but those who were in the secret of Ozema's history, withdrew.

The queen had not desired her husband, and the other attendants, to remain and witness the baptism of Ozema, out of a delicate feeling for the condition of a female stranger, whom her habits and opinions had invested with a portion of the sacred rights of royalty. She had noted the intensity of feeling with which the half-enlightened girl watched the movements of the archbishop and the parties, and the tears had forced themselves from her own eyes, at witnessing the struggle between love and friendship, that was pourtrayed in every lineament of her pale, but still lovely, countenance.

"Where cross?" Ozema eagerly demanded, as Mercedes stooped to fold the wasted form of the young Indian in her arms, and to kiss her cheek. "Give cross — Luis no marry with cross—give Ozema cross."

Mercedes, herself, took the cross from the bosom of her husband, where it had lain near his heart, since it had been returned to him, and put it in the hands of the princess.

"No marry with cross, then," murmured the girl, the tears suffusing her eyes, so as nearly to prevent her gazing at the much-prized bauble. "Now, quick, Señora, and make Ozema Christian."

The scene was getting to be too solemn and touching for many words, and the archbishop, at a sign from the queen, commenced the ceremony. It was of short duration; and Isabella's kind nature was soon quieted with the assurance that the stranger, whom she deemed the subject of her especial care, was put within the covenant for salvation that had been made with the visible church.

"Is Ozema Christian now?" demanded the girl, with a suddenness and simplicity, that caused all present to look at each other, with pain and surprise.

"Thou, hast, now, the assurance that God's grace will be offered to thy prayers, daughter," answered the prelate. "Seek it with thy heart, and thy end, which is at hand, will be more blessed."

"Christian no marry heathen?—Christian marry Christian?"

"This hast thou been often told, my poor Ozema," returned the queen—"the rite could not be duly solemnized between Christian and heathen."

"Christian marry first lady he love best?"

"Certainly. To do otherwise would be a violation of his vow, and a mockery of God."

"So Ozema think—but he can marry second wife—inferior wife—lady he love next. Luis marry Mercedes, first wife, because he love best—then he marry Ozema, second wife—lower wife—because he love next best—Ozema Christian, now, and no harm. Come, archbishop; make Ozema Luis second wife."

Isabella groaned aloud, and walked to a distant part of the chapel, while Mercedes burst into tears, and sinking on her knees, she buried her face in the cloth of the couch, and prayed fervently for the enlightening of the soul of the princess. The churchman did not receive this proof of ignorance in his penitent, and of her unfitness for the rite he had just administered, with the same pity and indulgence.

"The holy baptism thou hast just received, benighted woman," he said, sternly, "is healthful, or not, as it is improved. Thou hast just made such a demand, as already loadeth thy soul with a fresh weight of sin, and the time for repentance is short. No Christian can have two wives at the same time, and God knoweth no higher or lower, no first or last, between those whom his church hath united. Thou canst not be a second wife, the first still living."

"No would be to Caonabo—to Luis, yes. Fifty, hundred wife to dear Luis! No possible?"

"Self-deluded and miserable girl, I tell thee no. No—no—no—never—never—never. There is such a taint of sin in the very question, as profaneth this holy chapel, and the symbols of religion by which it is filled. Ay, kiss and embrace thy cross, and bow down thy very soul in despair, for—"

"Lord Archbishop," interrupted the Marchioness of Moya, with a sharpness of manner that denoted how much her ancient spirit was aroused, "there is enough of this. The ear thou would'st wound, at such a moment, is already deaf, and the pure spirit hath gone to the tribunal of another, and, as I trust, a milder judge. Ozema is dead!"

It was, indeed, true. Startled by the manner of the prelate — bewildered with the confusion of ideas that had grown up between the dogmas that had been crowded on her mind, of late, and those in which she had been early taught; and physically paralyzed by the certainty that her last hope of a union with Luis was gone, the spirit of the Indian girl had deserted its beautiful tenement, leaving on the countenance of the corpse a lovely impression of the emotions that had prevailed during the last moments of its earthly residence.

Thus fled the first of those souls, that the great discovery was to rescue from the perdition of the heathen. Casuists may refine, the learned dilate, and the pious ponder, on its probable fate in the unknown existence that awaited it; but the meek and submissive will hope all from the beneficence of a merciful God. As for Isabella, she received a shock from the blow, that temporarily checked her triumph at the success of her zeal and efforts. Little, however, did she foresee, that the event was but a type of the manner in which the religion of the cross was to be abused and misunderstood; a sort of practical prognostic of the defeat of most of her own pious and gentle hopes and wishes.

CHAPTER XV.

"A perfect woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, and command;
And yet a spirit still, and bright
With something of an angel light."
WORDSWORTH.

THE lustre that was thrown around the voyage of Columbus, brought the seas into favour. It was no longer deemed an inferior occupation, or unsuited to nobles, to engage in enterprises on its bosom; and that very propensity of our hero, which had so often been mentioned to his prejudice, in former years, was now frequently named to

his credit. Though his real connexion with Columbus is published, for the first time, in these pages, the circumstance having escaped the superficial investigations of the historians, it was an advantage to him to be known as having manifested what might be termed a maritime disposition, in an age when most of his rank and expectations were satisfied with the adventures of the land. A sort of fashion was got up on behalf of the ocean; and the cavalier who had gazed upon its vast and unbroken expanse, beyond the view of his mother earth, regarded him who had not, much as he who had won his spurs looked down upon him who had suffered the proper period of life to pass without making the effort. Many of the nobles whose estates touched the Mediterranean or the Atlantic, fitted out small coasters — the yachts of the fifteenth century — and were met following the sinuosities of the glorious coasts of that part of the world, endeavouring to derive a satisfaction from a pursuit that it seemed meritorious to emulate. That all succeeded, who attempted thus to transfer the habits of courts and castles to the narrow limits of xebecs and feluccas, it would be hazarding too much to assert; but there is little doubt that the spirit of the period was sustained by the experiments, and that men were ashamed to condemn that, which it was equally the policy and the affectation of the day to extol. The rivalry between Spain and Portugal, too, contributed to the feeling of the times; and there was soon greater danger of the youth who had never quitted his native shores, being pointed out for his want of spirit, than that the adventurer should be marked for his eccentric and vagrant instability.

In the meanwhile, the seasons advanced, and events followed, in their usual course, from cause to effect. About the close of the month of September, the ocean, just without that narrow and romantic pass that separates Europe from Africa, while it connects the transcendent Mediterranean with the broader wastes of the Atlantic, was glittering with the rays of the rising sun, which, at the same time, was gilding the objects that rose above the surface of the blue waters. The latter were not numerous, though a dozen different sails were moving slowly on their several courses, impelled by the soft breezes of the season. Of

these, our business is with one alone, which it may be well to describe in a few general terms.

The rig of the vessel in question, was latine, perhaps the most picturesque of all that the ingenuity of man has invented as the accessory of a view, whether given to the eye by means of the canvass, or in its real dimensions and substance. Its position, too, was precisely that which a painter would have chosen as the most favourable to his pencil, the little felucca running before the wind, with one of its high pointed sails extended on each side, resembling the pinions of some enormous bird that was contracting its wings as it settled towards its nest. Unusual symmetry was apparent in the spars and rigging; while the hull, which was distinguished by lines of the fairest proportions, had a neatness and finish that denoted the yacht of a noble.

The name of this vessel was the "Ozema," and she carried the Count of Llera with his youthful bride. Luis, who had acquired much of the mariner's skill, in his many voyages, directed the movements in person, though Sancho Mundo strutted around her decks with an air of authority, being the titular, if not the real patron of the craft.

"Ay — ay — good Bartolemeo, lash that anchor well," said the last, as he inspected the forecastle, in his hourly rounds; "for fair as may be the breezes, and mild as is the season, no one can know what humour the Atlantic may be in, when it fairly waketh up. In the great voyage to Cathay, nothing could have been more propitious than our outward passage, and nothing savour more of devils incarnate, than the homeward. Doña Mercedes maketh an excellent sailor, as ye all may see; and no one can tell which way, or how far, the humour of the Conde may carry him, when he hath once taken his departure. I tell ye, fellows, that glory and gold may alight upon ye all, any minute, in the service of such a noble; and I hope none of ye have forgotten to come provided with hawk's-bells, which are as remarkable for assembling doblas, as the bells of the Seville cathedral are for assembling Christians."

"Master Mundo—" called out our hero from the quarter-deck, "let there be a man sent to the extremity of the fore-

yard, and bid him look along the sea to the north and east of us."

This command interrupted one of Sancho's self-glorifying discourses, and compelled him to see the order executed. When the seaman who was sent aloft, had "shinned" his way to the airy and seemingly perilous position he had been told to occupy, an inquiry went up from the deck, to demand what he beheld.

"Señor Conde," answered the fellow, "the ocean is studded with sails, in the quarter your Excellency hath named, looking like the mouth of the Tagus, at the first of a westerly wind."

"Canst thou tell them, and let me know their numbers?" called out Luis.

"By the mass, Señor," returned the man, after taking time to make his count—"I see no less than sixteen—nay, now I see another, a smaller just opening from behind a carrack of size—seventeen, I make them in all."

"Then are we in season, love!" exclaimed Luis, turning towards Mercedes with delight—"once more shall I grasp the hand of the admiral, ere he quitteth us again for Cathay. Thou seemest glad as myself, that our effort hath not failed."

"That which gladdeneth thee, Luis, is sure to gladden me," returned the bride; "where there is but one interest, there ought to be but one wish."

"Beloved—beloved Mercedes—thou wilt make me every thing thou canst desire. This heavenly disposition of thine, and this ready consenting to voyage with me, will be sure to mould me in such a way that I shall be less myself than thee."

"As yet, Luis," returned the young wife, smiling, "the change promiseth to be the other way, since thou art much likelier to make me a rover, than I to make thee a fixture of the castle of Llera."

"Thou comest not out upon the sea, Mercedes, contrary to thine own wishes?" demanded Luis, with the earnest quickness of one who was fearful he might unconsciously have done an act of indiscretion.

"No, dearest Luis; so far from it, that I have come with satisfaction, apart from the pleasure I have had in obliging

thee. Fortunately, I feel no indisposition from the motion of the felucca, and the novelty is of the most agreeable and exciting kind."

To say that Louis rejoiced to hear this on more accounts than one, is but to add that he still found a pleasure in the scenes of the ocean.

In half an hour the vessel of the admiral was visible from the Ozema's deck, and ere the sun had reached the meridian, the little felucca was gliding into the centre of the fleet, holding her course towards the carrack of Columbus. The usual hailing passed, when, apprised of the presence of Mercedes, the admiral gallantly repaired on board the Ozema, to pay his respects in person. The scenes through which they had passed together, had created in Columbus a species of paternal regard for Luis, in which Mercedes shared, through the influence of her noble conduct during the events that occurred at Barcelona. He met the happy pair, therefore, with dignified affection, and his reception partook of the feelings that the Count and Countess so fully reciprocated.

Nothing could be more striking to one who had an opportunity of witnessing both, than the contrast between the means with which the Genoese sailed on this, and on his former voyage. Then he had set forth neglected, almost forgotten, in three vessels, ill-found, and worse-manned, whilst now, the ocean was whitened with his canvass, and he was surrounded by no inconsiderable portion of the chivalry of Spain. As soon as it was known that the Countess of Llera was in the felucca that had stopped the fleet, boats put off from most of the vessels, and Mercedes held a sort of court on the broad Atlantic; her own female attendants, among whom were two or three of the rank of ladies, assisting her in doing proper honour to the cavaliers who thronged the deck. The balmy influence of the pure air of the ocean, contributed to the happiness of the moment; and, for an hour, the Ozema presented a scene of gaiety and splendour, such as had never before been witnessed by any person present.

"Beautiful countess," cried one, who had been a rejected suitor of our heroine, "you see to what acts of desperation your cruelty hath driven me, who am going forth on an

adventure to the farthest east. It is well for Don Luis that I did not make this venture before he won your favour; as no damsel in Spain is expected, henceforth, to withstand the suit of one of the admiral's followers."

"It may be as you say, Señor," returned Mercedes, her heart swelling with the consciousness that he whom she had chosen had made this same boasted adventure, whilst others shrunk from its hazard, and when its result was still a mystery in the unknown future—"It may be as you say; but one of moderate wishes, like myself, must be content with these unambitious voyages along the coast, in which, happily, a wife may be her husband's companion."

"Lady," cried the gallant and reckless Alonzo de Ojeda, in his turn, "Don Luis caused me to roll upon the earth, in the tourney, by a fair and manly effort, that hath left no rancour behind it; but I shall outdo him now, since he is content to keep the shores of Spain in view, leaving to us the glory of seeking the Indies, and of reducing the Infidels to the sway of the two sovereigns!"

"It is a sufficient honour to my husband, Señor, that he can boast of the success you name, and he must rest satisfied with the reputation acquired in that one deed."

"Countess, a year hence, you would love him better, did he come forth with us, and show his spirit among the people of the Grand Khan!"

"Thou seest, Don Alonzo, that the illustrious admiral doth not altogether despise him as it is. They seek a private interview in my cabin together; an attention Don Christopher would not be apt to pay a recreant, or a laggard."

"'T is surprising!" resumed the rejected suitor; "the favour of the Conde with our noble admiral hath surprised us all, at Barcelona. Can it be, de Ojeda, that they have met in some of their earlier nautical wanderings?"

"By the mass! Señor," cried Alonzo, laughing, "if Don Luis ever met the admiral, as he met me in the lists, I should think one interview would answer for the rest of their days!"

In this manner did the discourse proceed, some speaking in levity, some in more sober mood, and all in amity.

Whilst this was passing on deck, Columbus had, indeed, retired to a cabin with our hero.

"Don Luis," said the admiral, when they were seated near each other, and alone, "thou knowest the regard I bear thee, and I feel certain that thou returnest it with an equal degree of esteem. I now go forth from Spain, on a far more perilous adventure than that in which thou wert my companion. Then I sailed concealed in contempt, and veiled from human eyes by ignorance and pity; now, have I left the old world, followed by malignancy and envy. These facts am I too old not to have seen, and foreseen. In my absence, many will be busy with my name. Even they who now shout at my heels, will become my calumniators, revenging themselves for past adulation by present detraction. The sovereigns will be beset with lies, and any disappointment in the degree of success will be distorted into crimes. I leave friends behind me, too—friends, such as Juan Perez, de St. Angel, Quintanilla, and thyself. On ye, then, do I greatly rely, not for favours, but for the interest of truth and justice."

"Señor, you may count upon my small influence under all circumstances. I have seen you in the day of trial, and it exceedeth ordinary misrepresentations to weaken my faith in you."

"This did I believe, Luis, even before it was so warmly and sincerely said," returned the admiral, squeezing the young man's hand with fervour. "I doubt if Fonseca, who hath now so much power in the affairs of India, is truly my friend. Then, there is one of thy blood and name, who hath already regarded me with unfavourable eyes, and whom I distrust exceedingly, should an occasion offer in which he might do me injury."

"I know him well, Don Christopher, and account him as doing no credit to the house of Bobadilla."

"He hath credit, nevertheless, with the king, which is of more importance, just now!"

"Ah! Señor, to that wily and double-faced monarch, you must look for nothing generous. So long as Doña Isabella's ear can be kept open to the truth, there is nothing to fear, but Don Ferdinand groweth each day more worldly and temporizing. Mass!—that one who, in youth, was so

bold and manly a knight, should in his age betray so many of the meannesses that would disgrace a Moor! My noble aunt, however, is a host in herself, and will ever remain true to you, as she commenced."

"God overruleth all, and it were sinful to distrust either his wisdom or justice. And now, Luis, one word touching thyself. Providence hath made thee the guardian of the happiness of such a being as is seldom found this side the gates of heaven. The man who is blessed with a virtuous and amiable wife, like her thou hast wedded, should erect an altar in his heart, on which he ought to make daily, nay, hourly, sacrifices of gratitude to God for the boon; since, of all earthly blessings, he enjoyeth the richest, the purest, and the most lasting, should he not be unmindful of his own riches. But a woman like Doña Mercedes is a creature as delicate as she is rare. Let her equanimity check thy impetuosity; her purity rebuke the less-refined elements of thy composition; her virtue stimulate thine own; her love keep thine in an unceasing flame, and her tenderness be a constant appeal to thy manly indulgence and protection. Fulfil all thy duties as a Spanish grandee, son, and seek felicity in the partner of thy bosom, and in love to God."

The admiral now gave Luis his blessing, and taking leave of Mercedes in the same solemn manner, he hastened to his carrack. Boat after boat quitted the felucca, many calling out their leave-takings even after they were at a distance. In a few minutes, the heavy yards swung round, and the fleet was again sweeping off towards the south-west, holding its way, as was then fancied, towards the distant shore of India. For an hour the Ozema lay where she had been left by Columbus, as if gazing at her retiring friends; then her canvass filled, and she hauled up towards that bight of the coast, at the bottom of which lay the port of Palos de Moguer.

The afternoon was deliciously balmy, and when the felucca drew in with the land, the surface of the sea was as smooth as that of an inland lake. There was just wind enough to cool the air, and to propel the little vessel three or four knots through the water. The day apartment, occupied by our hero and heroine, was on the quarter-deck. It was formed, on the exterior, by a tarpawlin,

bent like the tilt of a wagon, while the interior was embellished with a lining of precious stuffs that converted it into a beautiful little saloon. In front, a canvass bulkhead protected it from the gaze of the crew; and, towards the stern, a rich curtain fell, when it became necessary to shut out the view. The latter was now carelessly festooned, permitting the eye to range over a broad expanse of the ocean, and to watch the glories of the setting sun.

Mercedes reclined on a luxurious couch, gazing on the ocean, and Luis touched a guitar, seated on a stool at her feet. He had just played a favourite national air, which he had accompanied with his voice, and had laid aside the instrument, when he perceived that his young wife did not listen, with her usual fondness and admiration, to his music.

"Thou art thoughtful, Mercedes," he said, leaning forward to read the melancholy expression of those eyes that were so often glowing with enthusiasm.

"The sun is setting in the direction of the land of poor Ozema, Luis," Mercedes answered, a slight tremour pervading her voice; "the circumstance, in connexion with the sight of this boundless ocean, that so much resembleth eternity, hath led me to think of her end. Surely—surely—a creature so innocent can never be consigned to eternal misery, because her unenlightened mind and impassioned feelings were unable to comprehend all the church's mysteries!"

"I would that thou thought'st less on this subject, love; thy prayers, and the masses that have been said for her soul, should content thee; or, if thou wilt, the last can be repeated, again and again."

"We will offer still more," returned the young wife, scarce speaking above her breath, while the tears fell down her cheeks. "The best of us will need masses, and *we* owe this to poor Ozema. Didst thou bethink thee, to intercede again with the admiral, to do all service to Mattinao, on reaching Española?"

"That hath been attended to, and so dismiss the subject from thy mind. The monument is already erected at Llera, and, we may feel regret for the loss of the sweet girl, but can scarce mourn for her. Were I not Luis de Bobadilla,

thy husband, dearest, I could think her the subject of envy, rather than of pity."

"Ah! Luis, thy flattery is too pleasing to bring reproof, but it is scarce seemly. Even the happiness I feel, in being assured of thy love—that our fortunes, fate, name, interests are one—is, in truth, but misery, compared with the seraphic joys of the blessed; and to such joys I could wish Ozema's spirit might be elevated."

"Doubt it not, Mercedes; she hath all that her goodness and innocence can claim. Mass! If she even have half that I feel, in holding thee thus to my heart, she is no subject for grief, and thou say'st she hath, or wilt have, tenfold more."

"Luis—Luis—speak not thus! We will have other masses said at Seville, as well as at Burgos and Salamanca."

"As thou wilt, love. Let them be said yearly, monthly, weekly, for ever, or as long as the churchmen think they may have virtue."

Mercedes smiled her gratitude, and the conversation became less painful, though it continued to be melancholy. An hour passed in this manner, during which, the communion was of the sweet character that pervades the intercourse of those who love tenderly. Mercedes had already acquired a powerful command over the headlong propensities and impetuous feelings of her husband, and was gradually moulding him, unknown to herself, to be the man that was necessary to her own feelings. In this change, which was the result of influence, and not of calculation or design, she was aided by the manly qualities of our hero, which were secretly persuading him that he had now the happiness of another in his keeping, as well as his own. This is an appeal that a really generous mind seldom withstands, and far oftener produces the correction of minor faults, than any direct management, or open rebukes. Perhaps Mercedes's strongest arm, however, was her own implicit confidence in her husband's excellence, Luis feeling a desire to be that which she so evidently thought him; an opinion that his own conscience did not, in the fullest extent, corroborate.

Just as the sun had set, Sancho came to announce that he had let go the anchor.

"Here we are, Señor Conde,—here we are, at last, Se-

ñora Doña Mercedes, lying off the town of Palos, and within a hundred yards of the very spot where Don Christopher and his gallant companions departed for the discovery of the Indies—God bless him a hundred-fold, and all who went with him. The boat is ready to take you to the shore, Señora; and there, if you do not find Seville, or Barcelona, cathedrals and palaces, you will find Palos, and Santa Clara, and the Ship-Yard Gate—three places that are, henceforth, to be more renowned than either: Palos, as having sent forth the expedition; Santa Clara, as having saved it from destruction, by vows fulfilled at its altars; and the Gate, for having had the ship of the admiral built within it."

"And other great events, good Sancho!" put in the count.

"Just so, your Excellency; and for other great events. Am I to land you, lady?"

Mercedes assented, and in ten minutes she and her husband were walking on the beach, within ten yards of the very spot where Columbus and Luis had embarked the previous year. The firm sands were now covered with people, walking in the cool of the evening. Most of them were of the humbler classes, this being the only land, we believe, in which the population of countries that possess a favourable climate, do not thus mingle in their public promenades, at that witching hour.

Luis and his beautiful wife had landed merely for exercise and relaxation, well knowing that the felucca possessed better accommodations than any hosteria of Palos; and they fell into the current of the walkers. Before them was a group of young matrons, who were conversing eagerly, and sufficiently loud to be overheard. Our hero and heroine instantly ceased their own discourse, when they found that the subject was the voyage to Cathay.

"This day," said one of the party, in a tone of authority, "did Don Christopher sail from Cadiz; the sovereigns deeming Palos too small a port for the equipment of so great an enterprise. You may depend on what I tell ye, good neighbours; my husband, as you all well know, holding an appointment in the admiral's own ship."

"You are to be envied, neighbour, that he is in so good repute with so great a man!"

"How could he be otherwise, seeing that he was with him before, when few had courage to be his companions, and was ever faithful to his orders. 'Monica'—nay, it was '*good* Monica'—said the admiral to me, with his own mouth, 'thy Pepe is a true-hearted mariner, and hath conducted to my entire satisfaction. He shall be made the boatswain of my own carrack, and thou, and thy posterity, to the latest antiquity, may boast that you belong to so good a man.' These were his words; and what he said, he did,—Pepe being now a boatswain. But the *paters* and *aves* that I said to reach this good fortune, would pave this beach!"

Luis now stepped forward and saluted the party, making curiosity to know the particulars of the first departure, his excuse. As he expected, Monica did not recognize him in his present rich attire, and she willingly related all she knew, and not a little more. The interview showed how completely this woman had passed from despair to exultation, reducing the general and more public change of sentiment, down to the individual example of a particular case.

"I have heard much of one Pinzon," added Luis, "who went forth as pilot of a caravel in the voyage: what hath become of him?"

"Señor, he is dead!" answered a dozen voices, Monica's, however, so far getting the ascendency, as to tell the story. "He was once a great man in this quarter; but now his name is lost, like his life. He was untrue, and died of grief, it is said, when he found the Niña lying in the river, when he expected to have had all the glory to himself."

Luis had been too much engrossed with his own feelings to have heard this news before, and he continued his walk, musing and sad.

"So much for unlawful hopes, and designs that God doth not favour!" he exclaimed, when they had walked a considerable distance. "Providence hath, I think, been of the admiral's side; and certainly, my love, it hath been of mine."

"This is Santa Clara," observed Mercedes. "Luis, I would enter, and return a thanksgiving at its altars for thy

safety and return, and offer a prayer for the future success of Don Christopher."

They both entered the church, and they knelt together at the principal altar; for, in that age, the bravest warriors were not as much ashamed, as in our own times, of publicly acknowledging their gratitude to, and their dependence on, God. This duty performed, the happy pair returned silently to the beach, and went off to the felucca.

Early in the morning, the Ozema sailed for Malaga, again, Luis being fearful he might be recognized if he continued at Palos. Their port was reached in safety; and shortly after the party arrived at Valverde, the principal estate of Mercedes, where we shall leave our hero and heroine in the enjoyment of a felicity that was as great as could be produced by the connexion between manly tenderness on one side, and purity of feeling and disinterested womanly love on the other.

At a late day, there were other Luis de Bobadillas in Spain, among her gallant and noble, and other Mercedes', to cause the hearts of the gay and aspiring to ache; but there was only one Ozema. She appeared at court, in the succeeding reign, and, for a time, blazed like a star that had just risen in a pure atmosphere. Her career, however, was short, dying young and lamented; since which time, the name itself has perished. It is, in part, owing to these circumstances, that we have been obliged to drag so much of our legend from the lost records of that eventful period.

THE END.


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